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THE TRINITY HOSPITAL IN · · MILE END: AN OBJECT LESSON IN NATIONAL HISTORY, BY · · C. R. ASHBEE, M.A., ARCHITECT.

BEING THE FIRST MONOGRAPH OF THE COMMITTEE FOR THE SURVEY OF THE MEMORIALS OF GREATER LONDON.

PUBLISHED BY THE GUILD & SCHOOL OF HANDICRAFT, ESSEX HOUSE, BOW, LONDON, E. 1896.

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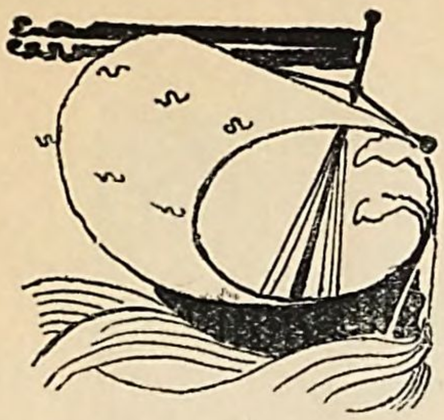

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ADDITIONS to the Committee are welcomed either as honorary (*i.e.*, subscribing) members, or as active members, who are prepared to visit buildings and assist in the making of the Register. Subscribing or active membership entitles to possession of the publications. Those desirous of joining the Committee in either capacity, or of obtaining copies of the forthcoming Register, should send in their names to the Secretary, Mr. ERNEST GODMAN, Essex House, Bow, E.

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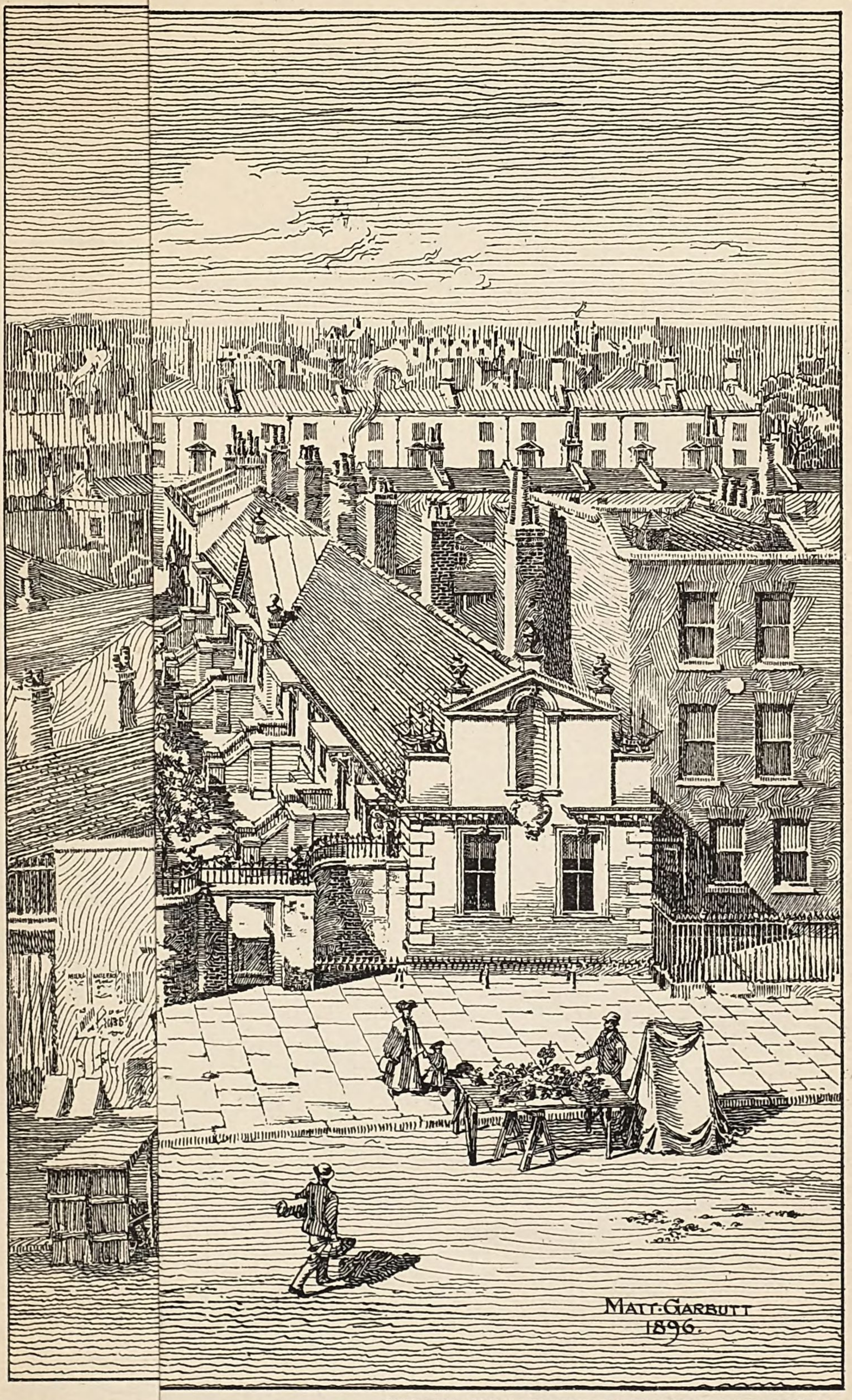


PHOTO-LITHO. SPRAGUE & Co 4 & 5 EAST HARDING STREET FETTER LANE E.C.

PHOTO-LITHO. STRACUE & Co. 4 & 5 EAST HARDING STREET, FETTER LANE, E.C.

PREFATORY NOTE.

WHILE these sheets are being completed in the press, the announcement appears that the Charity Commissioners have decided to dismiss the petition of the Corporation of Trinity House for the breaking up of the Hospital, and the consequent destruction of the Almshouses. The decision is conveyed in a letter carefully drawn up, and published in *The Times* of Wednesday, May 27th, 1896, and the reasons given for not sanctioning the proposal are stated as two

(1) That there has been no insufficiency of endowment;
(2) That there has been no failure of Trusts.

It will not unreasonably be asked, would the decision of the Commissioners have been the same had there not been so great a public outcry against the destruction of the Hospital.

THE letter contains a wise and valuable judgment; but it avoids, and doubtless rightly from the immediate point of view of the Commissioners, any direct reference to the greater questions of National History, public health and beauty, and the maintenance of the original intentions of the founders. These questions are usually dismissed as sentimental; but may it not be pleaded from the public point of view, and without in any way impugning the grounds on which the Commissioners have based their judgment, that the maintenance or destruction of any national memorial should in future be treated on the broadest public grounds?

C. R. ASHBEE.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE WATCH COMMITTEE AND OTHERS.

PLATE			PAGE
1.	Plan of the whole site.	Mr. J. Allen Mr. Ernest Godman	34 & 35
2.	General view.	Mr. Matt. Garbutt	4 & 5
3.	Front Elevation Elevation of E. Wing Plan of front Wall	Mr. J. Allen	6 & 7
4.	Elevation of East Gable Stone Ship on Gable ends	Mr. J. Allen	8
5.	Detail of Mouldings.	Mr. J. Allen	30 & 31
6.	Elevation of Chapel with sections.	Mr. Ernest Godman	14 & 15
7.	Stained Glass in S.E. Window (coloured).	Mr. Ernest Godman	22 & 23
8.	Stained Glass in S.W. Window (coloured).	Mr. Ernest Godman	24 & 25
9.	Statue of Captain Maples.	Mr. Max Balfour	26
10.	Statue of Captain Sandes.	Mr. Max Balfour	20
11.	Reading Room (interior).	Mr. Max Balfour	18
12.	Two Old Captains playing Drafts	Mr. Max Balfour	28
13.	Sketch from the Governor's Room.	Mr. Joseph Pennell	*Frontispiece*

(Kindly lent to the Committee by the Editor of the *Daily Chronicle*.)

Sir Richard Browne's Arms. From a photo. by Mr. F. R. Taylor ... 17

PLAN · OF · WESTERN · HALF · OF · FRONT · WALL·

PLAN · OF · EASTERN · HALF · OF · FRONT · WALL·

WEST · WING

EAST · WING·

CENTRE LINE

CENTRE LINE

ADJOINING · BUILDING·

INSCRIPTION

INSCRIPTION

THE ADJOINING HOUSE ON THIS SIDE STANDS BACK ABOUT 7 FEET·

THERE · ARE · NO · JOINTS · TO · BE · FOUND · IN · THESE · PIERS·

FRONT · ELEVATION·

ELEVATION · OF · EAST · WING·

SCALE · OF · FEET·

10 5 0 10 20 30 40 50 60 FEET·

PHOTO-LITHO. SPRAGUE & Co 4 & 5 EAST HARDING STREET FETTER LANE, E.C.

CHAPTER I. THE PURPOSE OF THE MONOGRAPH.

THE endeavour of the following Monograph is to give a description of a famous London building, to trace its relation to certain periods of national life, and to show what it may be regarded as implying to us historically and æsthetically at the present day.

THE FOUNDATION OF THE TRINITY HOSPITAL.

MOST great architecture bears upon it the mark of what is best in the national character that gives birth to it, and its purpose is always distinct and appropriate. The Trinity Hospital, or College, built in the reign of William III., in 1695, shares this appropriateness with other great English buildings, and up to the present day serves the wise and beneficent purpose for which it was originally erected. What, however, gives the Hospital in Mile End its peculiar historic interest, is that it remains the only memorial left to us of the Trinity Corporation, or, as it would be more correct to call it, the Guild of the Trinity House, in the time when the Guild was actually the English Navy. From the day of Henry VIII. to the day of James II., from the time of Sir Thomas Spert, the traditional founder, to the time of Mr. Secretary Pepys, the English Navy either actually is synonymous with the Trinity Guild, or is guided and watched over from the Trinity House of Deptford Strond. The little group of buildings on the Waste are the only remaining record of the work of the Guild at the time of its greatest influence and authority, and they combine in themselves the two vitally important traditions, that of the Navy Office with its little official Board under the later Stuarts, out of which sprang the Admiralty, and the Guild tradition of the middle ages, which brought with it the element of charity and fellowship. It was in the conception of this later tradition that the hospital was built, by those who were working out the destinies of the earlier, and it will be seen that the architecture is expressive of both.

THE MEDIÆVAL AND STUART TRADITIONS.

IN its style and external characteristics, the building is classic, of the period of Sir Christopher Wren, in its planning and general disposition it is still mediæval. The endowments and the bequests of the site are of the Stuart time, but the nature and manner of endowing are in spirit many centuries earlier, and the buildings are built on the model of an earlier set at Deptford, now destroyed, which, in their turn, very probably replaced a yet earlier foundation. The character of the middle ages is evidenced in the planning of the Collegium, the little open court walled off, with the chapel at the end for service, and the manner and purpose of the Charity, as we shall presently see, was in no wise Stuart, but entirely mediæval.

TO trace this dual relationship between the existing buildings and the two periods of English history to which they owe their origin, it will be necessary to briefly review such of the functions of the Trinity Corporation as may be considered to have given rise to the Hospital.

CHAPTER II. THE TRINITY COLLEGE AS A RECORD OF THE MIDDLE AGES.

MR. BARRETT in his book on the Trinity House* has already written the history of the Corporation so carefully, that little or nothing remains to be said, but he has not, I think, done justice to the Hospital, nor has he sufficiently brought out the historical importance of what is left of the Corporation's old world records in brick and stone. What I wish to do here is to trace the connection between the historical idea underlying the institution of the Hospital, and the mediæval principles of the Mariners' Guild of Deptford, to which the Corporation owes its origin, and to discover in so doing what were the essentially mediæval principles in the spirit of which the Hospital was founded. To do this more satisfactorily, we may first of all compare the constitution and functions of the Deptford Guild with those of other Maritime Guilds in mediæval sea towns, notably those dedicated to the Trinity, and yet remaining to us under the name of Trinity Houses. We shall find that for the most part they possess certain features in common.

THE CHARTER OF HENRY VIII.

IT is not here necessary to go into the question of the remoter origin of the Guilds, or to consider whether they were or were not of Teutonic growth. Suffice it that, in the middle ages, they represented what we may term the Teutonic principle of voluntary Association, and different trades and occupations formed themselves into societies bearing distinct characteristics. The Tradition held since the beginning of the 17th century and confirmed by the memorial in Stepney Church as to the founding of the Deptford Guild by Sir Thomas Spert† appears to me to be quite compatible with the existence of an earlier Guild, and this the Charter of Henry VIII.‡ would seem to prove. "And further" says the act of Henry VIII. "we have granted to our said liege people and subjects (*i.e.*, the existing Guild), that they may have and enjoy all and singular the Liberties, Franchises, and Privileges, which their Predecessors, the Shipmen or Mariners of this our Realm of England, ever had, used or enjoyed. And also that they may have and hold to them, and their successors, all the lands and tenements which they now have in Deptford Strond aforesaid, of the gift or grant of whatsoever person or persons."

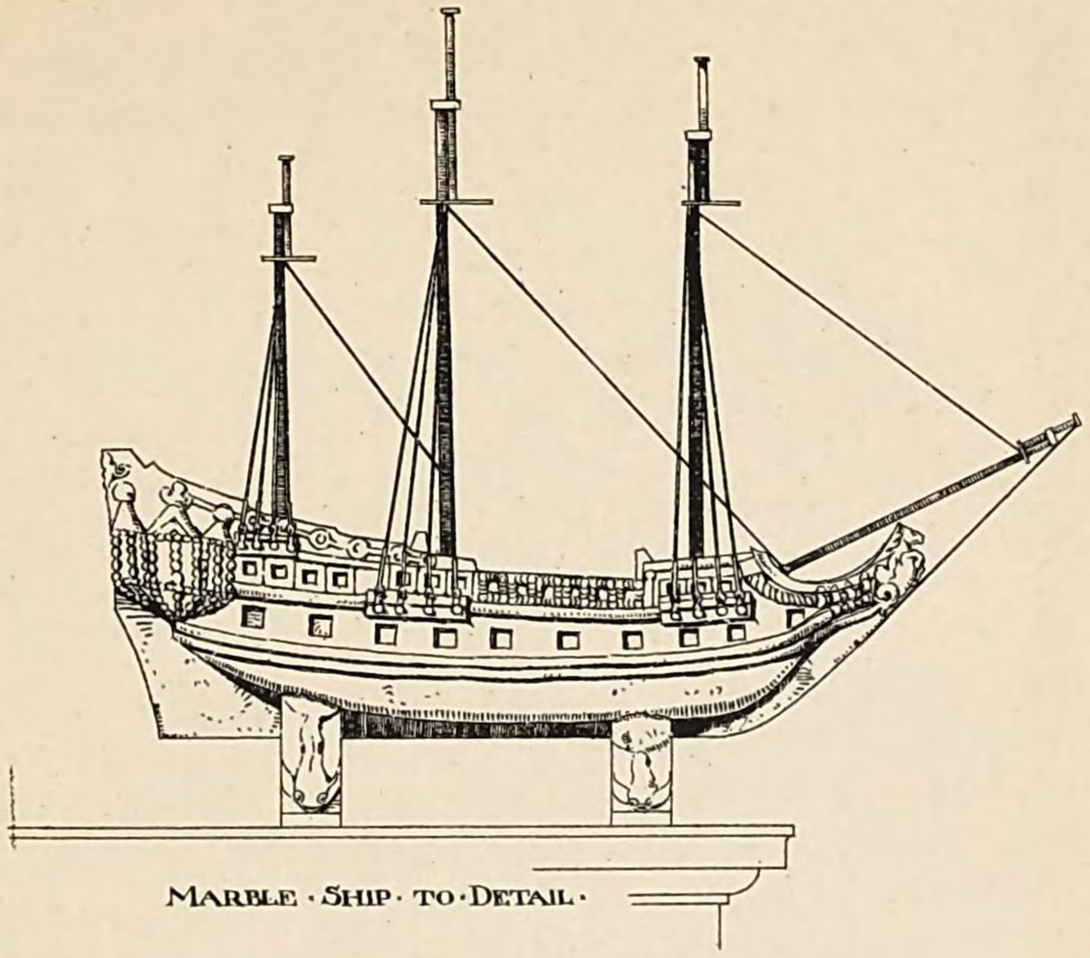
A RE-INCORPORATION.

WHAT took place in the reign of Henry VIII., then, was merely a re-modelling or re-incorporation, one of those periodical re-incorporations by which the Guilds adapted themselves to changing social conditions, and while not accepting altogether Mr. Barrett's view that "the Guild was incorporated as a consequence of the wise naval policy of Henry VIII.," I think it may be safely stated that Sir Thomas Spert, who, according to

* Barrett's History of the Trinity House of Deptford Strond, London, 1893.

† Which memorial however was erected in 1622, 81 years after his death.

‡ The act of Henry VIII. exemplified by George III. See the Royal Charter granted to the Trinity House, 1763. 8vo. in the British Museum.



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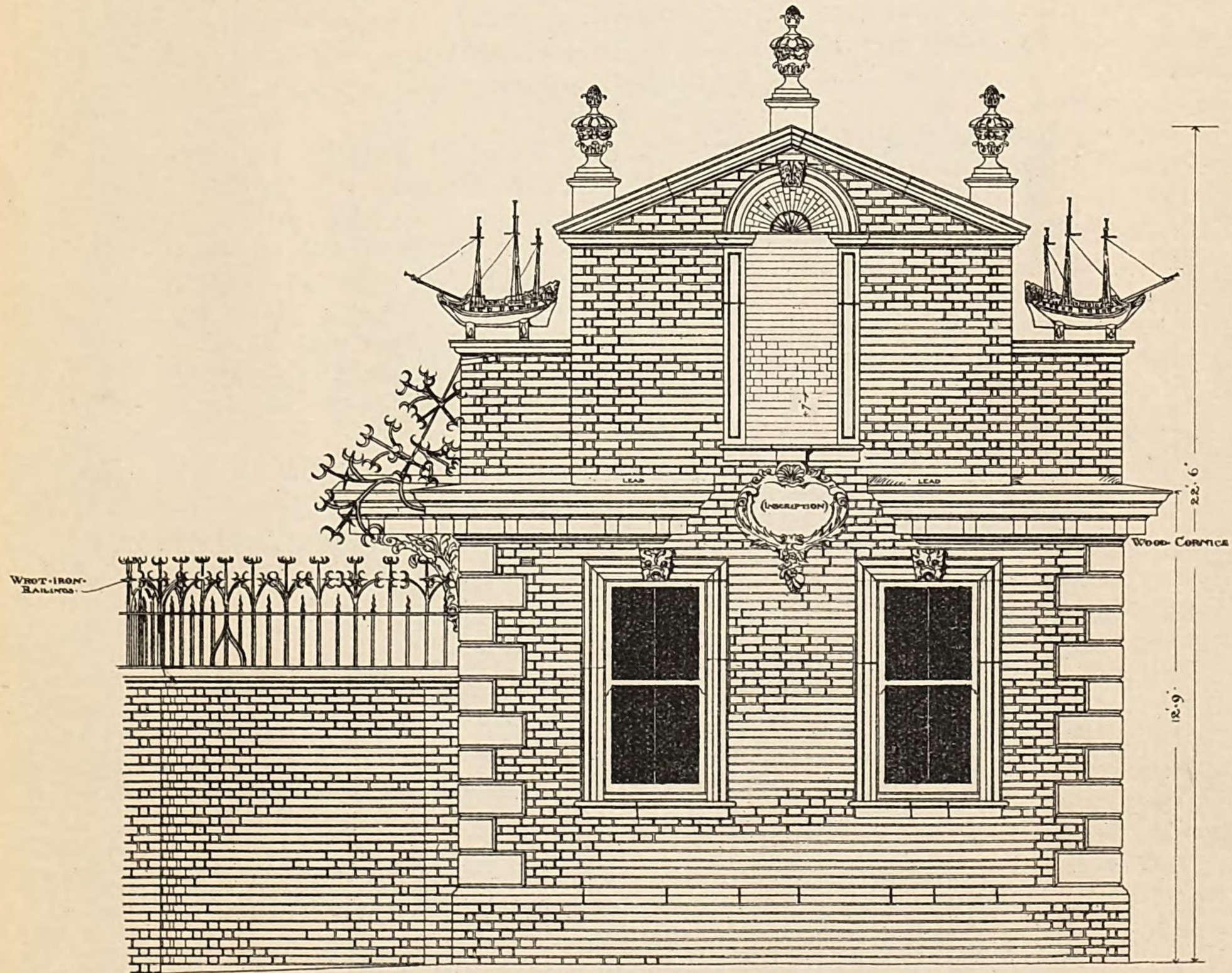
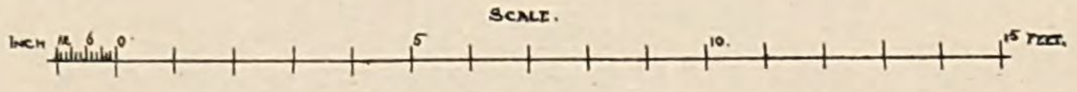


· ELEVATION · OF · EAST · GABLE ·



the inscription on the monument, was Controller of the Navy, was Master of the Guild at the time of its re-incorporation, and that in accordance with the general policy of Henry VIII. the existing Guild that controlled the mouth of the Thames, as the Hull Guild controlled the mouth of the Humber, and the Newcastle Guild the mouth of the Tyne, was re-modelled with slight variations in its mediæval constitution in 1514. It is much to be regretted that the Charters that might have established these facts have been destroyed by fire, but we may safely assume the existence of the earlier mediæval fraternity, and an inspection of the records left to us of the other Trinity Guilds devoted to naval purposes in other parts of the Kingdom, will give us a fairly complete picture of what the mediæval Guild down to the Stuart time must have been like.

OTHER TRINITY HOUSES.

WE find then that there were Associations of this nature, and of which we have records, in the principal sea-faring towns of mediæval England, in Newcastle, Boston, Hull, Lynn, Sleaford, Wisbeach and Wyngale, and their nature, purpose, and function is for the most part the same. They are voluntary associations of mariners, they fulfil the purpose of burial and benefit clubs, they are religious in character, and also social, they undertake in varying degrees the duties of the port, sea or fen water with which their members come in contact, and when need offers, they act as coast defence, in other words, they are Royal Marine and Navy.

THE NEWCASTLE TRINITY.

TO take first the Trinity Guild of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, we find that it purchases its present House in 1492, and pays a red rose yearly every mid-summer for ever as quit money, and throughout the Tudor period it exercises similar privileges to those allowed by Henry VIII. to the London Guild. In 1536 the King grants it a new Charter, gives it license to build and embattle two towers as lighthouses, and confirms its rights of pilotage and primage. In 1584, it becomes the Trinity House of Newcastle, and from successive Kings receives local privileges similar to those granted to the Trinity House in London.

THE BOSTON AND HULL TRINITIES.

IN Boston we have another Trinity Guild who had their Hall and did duty towards "the better maintenance of the Bridge and Port of Boston."* In Hull was a very famous Trinity of whose founding we have a record in 1369. A group of some thirty worthy folk of Hull come together and form a fraternity, which, like those of Newcastle, and Boston, and Deptford, ultimately becomes the Corporation of Trinity House and legislates in matters of seamanship. There are brothers and sisters who form the benefit and burial club, they agree to meet regularly at the Church of the Holy Trinity, or submit to the wax fine, and they make regulations for the maintenance of any of their number in old age or infirmity, even to the tunic and the little cap at the feast of St. Martin.

THE LYNN TRINITY.

IN Lynn, the great mediæval Merchants' City of the East, the Trinity Guild occupied a most important position. In the reign of John one of its members was mayor of the town, and at the time of the Reformation,—for we may estimate the wealth of Guilds by the number of Chaplains they

* Walford, "Guilds."

supported and gave Henry VIII. the opportunity of suppressing—its wealth must have been very great, for it maintained thirteen.

THE WYNGALE TRINITY.

THE Guild of the Holy Trinity of Wyngale again gives us a record from 1387, and we find rules laid down for keeping up lights, and for the searching of the bodies of the drowned.

THE WISBEACH TRINITY.

THE most interesting of all the records of Guilds dedicated to the Trinity, is that of Wisbeach, which appears to have been founded in the reign of Richard II. (1379), and which did many years of good work in keeping out the sea and saving the fen country from inundations. This Guild has left us a minute account of its receipts and expenditure for the first few years of its existence. The Christmas feast, the cost of the image of the Trinity, and the pay to the plasterers for putting it up; the removal of the Parclos; the beer for the workmen, the woollen cloths for the hoods that came all the way from London for the brethren, and the expenses of a certain grand Guild feast, at which it would seem that apparel for ten dancers had to be purchased—all are recorded, not to mention the cost of the many delightful things with which the hall was ornamented. As might have been expected, the expenditure exceeded the income, and so a levy had to be raised, which, says the chronicler, "ought to be paid by the sixty-seven brethren, viz., each of them 5d.; and thus there would remain 1s. 11¼d. (no mean sum!), which the said brothers expended in wine before they departed, and so, from the account, nothing remains. Amen."

THERE are also a variety of other entries from time to time, records of local government, the maintenance of the fen-dyke against inundations, judicial business, the institution of a school, matters of benefit, burial, and alms, and among them in 1477 "for the salvation of the soul of Thomas Blower" the entry of a bequest of "one new edifice called the Almshouse, built and situate in the New Market of Wisbeach."*

THE DEPTFORD TRINITY.

FROM the character of these various Guilds, we may also judge the character of the Guild of Deptford, and in what exists of its customs and its duties at the present day the mediæval conditions are quite evident. In the lights and pilotage we have the origin of powers similiar to those of Boston, Hull and Newcastle, in the Mile End Hospital is traceable the old principle of Mediæval Charity, in the Chapel the religious intention, and in the suits of the old pensioners—the blue stuff and the brass buttons as we still see them—the "cloth for the hoods that came from London" for the brethren of Wisbeach, or the tunics and caps for the brethren of Hull.

IT must be borne in mind, however, that these associations in the middle ages were not charities. The object was not to give doles or alms to the poor. They were voluntary associations, trade unions, in this instance trade unions of mariners, and clubs for mutual aid. They fulfilled divers and certain functions, and the character of corporate unity

* Watson's "History of Wisbeach."

gave also a distinct character to the manner in which their benefits were bestowed. Even well into the 17th century there appears neither in the Deptford Guild, nor in such of the others as still continue, any change in the corporate conception; it is understood that help is given to the poorer members of the Guild; but it is not charity bestowed from outside or from above, it is internal—the real sort of charity, as one might call it—every brother of the fraternity has equal rights. One could wish that this mediæval conception of the limits and functions of charity were a little more regarded by the Charity Commissioners in their schemes of reconstruction.

THE HULL TRINITY IN 1662.

IN his "Very Merry Wherry-Ferry Voyage," Taylor, the poet, writing of Hull, in 1662, says of the Trinity House in that City:—

> "Besides for every sea or marine cause
> They have a house of Trinity, whose lawes
> And orders doe confirm, or else reforme
> That which is right, or that which wrongs deform;
> It is a comely built, well ordered place,
> But that which most of all the house doth grace
> Are rooms for widowes, who are old and poore,
> And have bin wives to Mariners before.
> They are for house roome, food or lodging, or
> For firing, Christianly provided for,
> And as some dye, some doth their places win,
> As one goes out another doth come in."

THE COMMUNAL LIFE.

JUST so it is in the Mile End Hospital to this day. From Taylor's poem, too, it would appear that the ladies of the Guild not only lived in the house itself, but that Government and Communal life were conducted under the same roof. I press this point of the Communal life, upon which all these houses of Trinity were founded, because in our often insufficiently considered re-modelling of Chairties now-a-days, we lose sight of the founders' intentions, even when they are quite realizable.*

THE STATUS OF THE MEDIÆVAL GUILD BROTHERS.

But there is a further point still to be noted, which applies to the Trinity Houses and their Charities:—the status of the recipients of the aid. I have said that these endowments were none of them in the nature of doles or alms to the poor, but insurance for house, home, life and limb to brothers and sisters of the Guild. How this was the case even in Evelyn's day is brought out very pointedly in the unintentional rebuke which he enters against the Trinity Corporation† in the building of their Hospital at Deptford. The Seamen's widows he apparently thought were well enough off, and though the work was a good one, the money would have been better spent on the poor of the parish. The distinction between the seamen's widows and the poor is one that it is well to bear in mind, and it brings with it the reflection that the contemplated destruction of the mediæval purpose,—the Communal life of the Mile End Hospital, must inevitably bring with it a lowering of status to the recipients of the Charity. Our Charity Commissioners have not yet abandoned the prevalent belief that the "out pension" is preferable to what is commonly

* See letters of Sir Robert Hunter, Miss Octavia Hill and Sir Walter Besant in Chapter VI. of this Monograph.

† Evelyn's Diary, May 25th, 1671.

and contemptuously called the "alms house," but that is because they have as yet made no attempt to re-cast one of these old Charities in the fuller Communal spirit of the middle ages. A knowledge of the way in which "out-pensions" work, and of the trend of modern industrial life into groups and communities, will show that not only might a re-modelling on the mediæval method prove a wise one, but that it may be inevitable in the near future. It is to be hoped that the Commissioners will be sufficiently far sighted to see that such of these institutions of Communal Charity as still remain, have yet a great purpose to fulfil in the newer industrial life that is springing up around them.

THE DEPTFORD TRINITY AS THE NAVY.

THERE is yet something to add as to the militant functions shared by the Deptford Guild with the other Maritime and Trade Guilds of England. Just as they were voluntary associations for life, limb and labour, so they were also associations for defence when called upon. The Guilds of Craft sent their levies to the City Watch, the Maritime Guilds served the purpose of coast defence or of sea power. The most important of these was inevitably the one that controlled the port of London. There was no navy, as we understand it, in the middle ages, and when fighting had to be done it was done by marine levies. It is a traditional memory of ours that when the Spanish Armada came, the English ships were so little that the great Spaniards shot away over their heads, but those little ships were guided and directed by the Guild of Mariners from Trinity House. We have records of the transference of rights that passed between the Lord High Admiral Howard of Effingham and the Trinity Brethren. In the stately preamble of the Act of Elizabeth in 1566* "Touchinge Sea-markes and Maryners" the corporation of the Trinity House is described (note the significance of the words!) as being "charged with the conduction of the Queen's Majesties Nayve Royall." History has shown that this little impromptu navy answered its purpose and did its work very well; for us it only remains to observe that the memory of it in any practical form, and of the Guild of Mariners who manned it, is preserved only in the Mile End College.

THE ACT OF ELIZABETH, 1566.

HERE then are some of the facts which a study of such of the mediæval Guilds as were distinctly maritime, and of the Deptford Guild in particular, brings home to us. From these facts we can reconstruct the history, nature, purpose and functions of the Trinity Guild in London, and we note how its mediæval traditions have found expression in the Hospital in Mile End, how, in short, it is an object lesson in mediæval history. But if it preserves for us the Guild traditions of the Middle Ages, and of the days when the navy was the maritime levy, it preserves for us in a still more vivid manner—as I shall show in the next chapter—a yet more sacred tradition, the birth of the British Navy itself, in the transition period between mediæval and modern times.

* Royal Charter, 1763 (quoted above).

CHAPTER III. THE TRINITY COLLEGE AS A RECORD OF THE STUART PERIOD AND THE GROWTH OF THE NAVY.

WE owe our navy in great measure to the Stuarts, and the Trinity Corporation is the agency through which the work of construction is accomplished. It is in the reign of James II., just before the time when the Mile End Hospital is built, that the Deptford Guild receives its final, and, perhaps, its most important re-incorporation.* In the day of Elizabeth the Guild *was* the navy, in the Stuart time the functions begin to differentiate, and the strictly naval as apart from the marine factor forms outside, but is still inseparably connected with the Guild. On July 20th, 1685, Evelyn recorded in his diary, "The Trinity Company met this day, which should have been on y^e^ Monday after Trinity, but was put off by reason of the Royal Charter being so large that it could not be ready before. Some immunities were superadded. Mr. Pepys, Secretary to y^e^ Admiralty, was a second time chosen Master. There were present the Duke of Grafton, Lord Dartmouth, Master of y^e^ Ordnance, the Commissioners of y^e^ Navy, and brethren of y^e^ Corporation. We went to church according to costome, and then took barge to the Trinity House, in London, where we had a great dinner, above 80 at one table." It is not till the time of Admiral Blake and of the later Stuarts that the modern navy takes definite shape as apart from the Trinity House, but the connection still remains, and inseparably bound up with these half-naval, half-civic duties are the names of Samuel Pepys, Sir Richard Browne, John Evelyn, Charles II., and James II. With all of them the Trinity House and its Hospital are directly connected.

THE DIFFERENTIATION OF NAVAL AND CIVIC FUNCTIONS

AS is to be expected, a notable change comes over the mediæval Guild in the 17th century. It becomes official, and partakes more of its modern form; we note a growing division into two distinct classes. The allusions to it in the diaries of Evelyn and Pepys give us the key to this; there is the Secretary to the Navy, Mr. Samuel Pepys, for whom a special clause is inserted in the Charter of Charles II., and there are the poorer brethren and the charities; but so essential to the proper development of naval affairs is the Trinity Corporation, that the leading naval officials act in its councils, and the Crown assumes rights in the appointment of its master. Instead of the simple guild life of the earlier time we come now into a different existence. The atmosphere is more courtly, less breezy, in lieu of the guildsman's tunic and hood, we have the periwig and the curls.

THE GROWTH OF THE OFFICIAL CLASS.

WRITING in very evident satisfaction at the good fare he had received at the Trinity House, Evelyn enters in his diary, June 19th, 1671, "To a splendid dinner at the greate roome in Deptford Trinity House, Sr. Tho. Allen chosen Master, and succeeding the Earl of Craven," and again on March 26th, 1673,—for a good diarist is usually a good dinner eater—"I

* The Royal Charter, 1763 (above quoted).

was sworn a younger brother of the Trinity House, with my most worthy and long acquainted noble friend Lord Ossorie (eldest son to the Duke of Ormond), Sir Richd. Browne my Father-in-law being now Master of that Society; after which there was a greate Collation." We are reminded of the great collations of the City Companies of the present day and of the membership of those august bodies, where it not unfrequently happens that any connection with the craft or mystery of the Guild in its original intention is the exception rather than the rule.

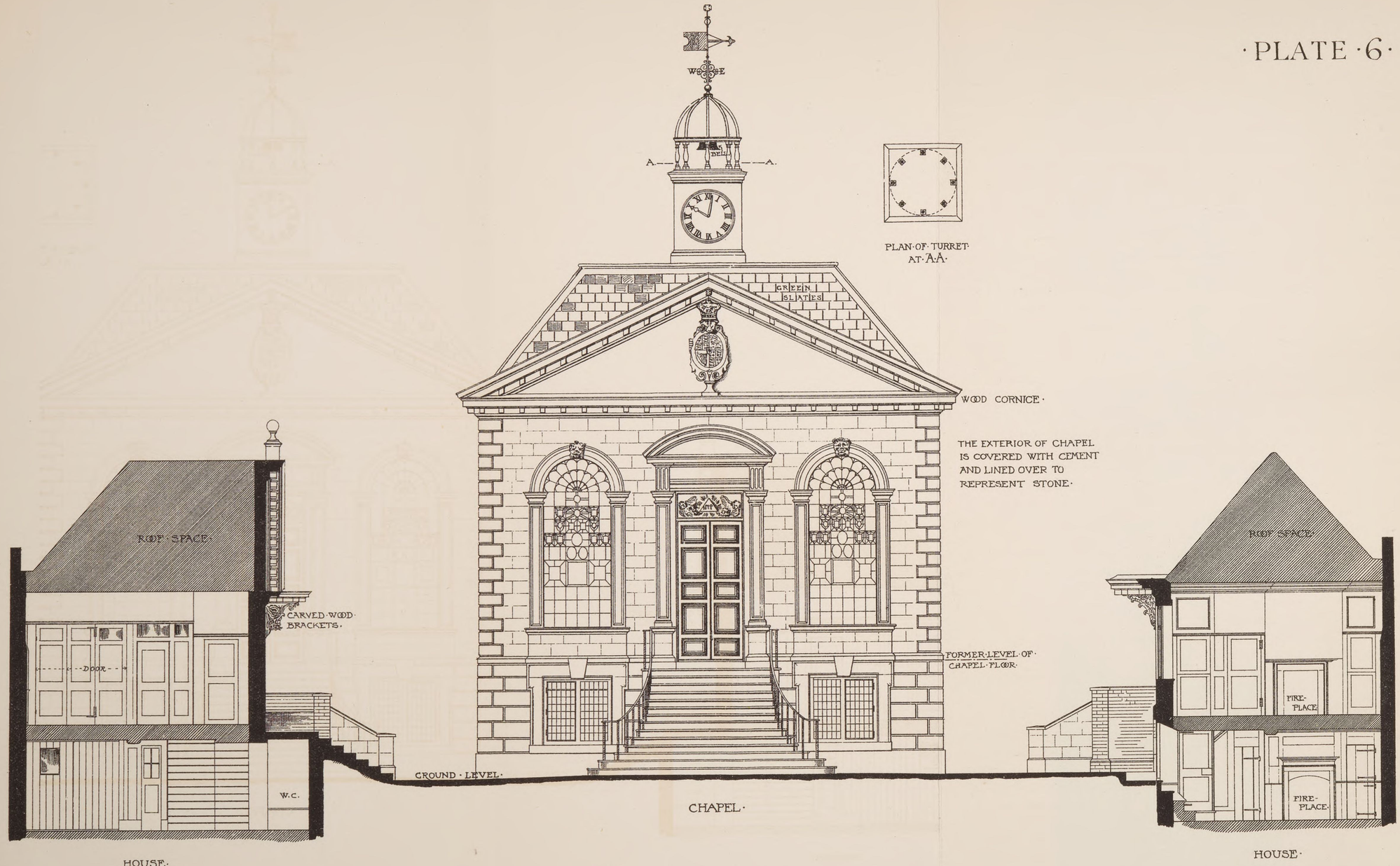
HOW far the notable "quality" that Evelyn and Pepys delight to honour in their postprandial reflections had any working connection with Pilotage and Ballastage and Buoyage, or even with the defence of the Thames, it is now difficult to trace, but it is evident that the official class enter in and take possession, as it were, of the ancient Mariners' Guild of Deptford. Possibly the right of patrimony may, though to a lesser degree, have warped the Mariners' Guild as it did the other Guilds of England, but the political importance of the command of the Port of London necessarily caused a gravitation of the political official to the Board of the Trinity House.

JOHN EVELYN.

EVELYN himself was a man of independent means, a gentleman, a courtier and a scholar, who was trained for the law and had no direct connection with naval matters. He dabbled in science, architecture, education and horticulture, and it was not till later on in life that he was made Lord Privy Seal by James II. and Treasurer of the Greenwich Hospital for Seamen. That he should have been appointed a Brother of the Trinity had reason enough, for his studies in navigation, and in timber for shipbuilding exercised a considerable influence on his contemporaries. His famous Sylva, or "Discourse concerning Forest Trees," was the outcome of the appeal of the Navy Office to the Royal Society,—of which he was one of the original members,—on the question of timber for shipbuilding; and the significant words of Isaac Disraeli are enough to prove the importance attaching to this when he says "Inquire at the Admiralty how the fleets of Nelson have been constructed, and they can tell you that it was with the oaks which the genius of Evelyn planted."

SIR RICHARD BROWNE.

BUT Evelyn had yet another link with the Trinity House, which bears upon the actual Hospital about which this Monograph treats. His father-in-law, Sir Richard Browne, was an Elder Brother and a great benefactor to the guild, indeed to one of his benefactions the Mile End Hospital may in part be traced, and the remnants of the Deptford endowment are at present in Mile End. "I dined," writes the diarist on May 25th, 1671, "at a feast made for me and my wife by the Trinity Company for our passing a fine of the land which Sir R. Browne my Wife's father freely gave to found and build their Colledge or Almeshouses on at Deptford, it being my wife's after her father's decease. It was a good and charitable work and gift, but would have been better bestow'd on the poor of that parish, than on the seamen's widows, the Trinity Compy. being very rich and the rest of the poore of the parish exceedingly indigent."



SECTION·ACROSS·MAIN·QUADRANGLE:LOOKING·NORTH·

SCALE·OF·FEET·

10 5 0 5 10 15 20 25 30

ON the wall opposite the North Side of the Chapel at Mile End may still be seen the coat of arms of Sir Richard Browne (see page 17). I am inclined to think with Mr. Barrett that this coat was originally at Sayes Court, and was subsequently put up at the Deptford Hospital, from whence it was removed here. The engraving which remains to us of the destroyed Hospital at Deptford,* though it only shows one side of the block, tends to prove that the Deptford foundation was the prototype of the existing one in Mile End, the latter therefore fitly commemorates the name of Sir Richard Browne, who was in a sense its author.

CAPN. MUDD, OF RATCLIFF

THE actual founder of the Mile End College was Captain Henry Mudd, of Ratcliff, as the inscription† on the building states (see pl. 4, p. 8), and this worthy is recorded in conjunction with Samuel Pepys, as one of those whose names appear in the James II. Charter.‡ As the extracts which relate to Pepys and Mudd are significant as proving the social change that had come over the Guild in the Stuart time, and the distinction between the wealthier official class and the poorer or pensioned class, to which I have before referred, I give them at some length.

THE CLASS DISTINCTION.

"AND for the better execution and accomplishment of this our Will and Grant in that behalf, We have assigned, nominated, constituted, and made, and by these Presents, for Us, our Heirs, and Successors, do assign, nominate, constitute, and make our trusty and well beloved *Samuel Pepys*, esquire, *Secretary* of our *Admiralty* of *England*, to be the *first* and present *Master* of the said Guild, Fraternity, or Brotherhood, to continue in the said Office or Place by himself, or his sufficient Deputy . . . . . from henceforth until the Morrow after *Trinity Sunday*, commonly called *Trinity Monday*, now next coming . . . .

"AND also we have assigned, nominated, constituted, and made, and by these Presents, for Us, our Heirs, and Successors, do assign, nominate, constitute, and make Captain *John Nichols*, Captain *Henry Mudd*, Captain *Nicholas Kerrington*, and Captain *William Green* to be the *four first and present Wardens* of the said Guild . . . . .

"AND that all and singular sum and sums of money, whatsoever, due or hereafter to be due, and received by the said *Decrees*, *Orders*, *Agreements*, *Fines*, *Forfeitures*, or otherwise, shall be to the use, Commodity, and Profit of the said Guild, Fraternity, or Brotherhood, unto and for the repairing of a certain House or Tenement, commonly called or known by the name of *Trinity House;* and of other *Tenements* or *Almshouses*, situate and being in Deptford-Strond, aforesaid, and Upper Deptford, in the said County of *Kent*, belonging to the said Guild, Fraternity, or Brotherhood; and for the finding of certain poor Persons, *Brethren*, and the *Wives* of *Brethren*, of the said Guild, Fraternity, or Brotherhood, which are fallen into Decay, Misery, Poverty and Need, or hereafter shall fortune to fall

* Crace Collection, British Museum.

† "THIS ALMESHOVSE wherein 28 decayed Masters & Comanders of Ships or ye widows of such are maintain'd was built by ye Corpo. of TRINTY HOVSE An. 1695. The Ground was given by Capn. Heny. MUDD of Ratcliff an Elder Brother whose widow did also contribute."

‡ The Royal Charter 1763 (above quoted).

into Decay, Misery, Poverty and Need; and also for Relief of other poor *Mariners* and *Seafaring-Men*, such as by them, and their successors, shall be thought meet and necessary therewith to be relieved; and for other *public uses* of the said society."

THE GUILD ELEMENT IN STUART AND MODERN TIMES.

THE old guild system remains, but class division tends to separate the functions. The hard and fast division between rich and poor, between Elder Brother and Pensioner, is, however, one that does not appear till the present day, and the final expression of it is in the plan already adopted in the case of the Deptford Hospital and which is now under consideration for Mile End, of sweeping the whole institution away and substituting a money dole in place of the old corporate life of the College with its ancient seamen, their wives and widows. Such a course would not only destroy the constructive record of the Stuart time, it would also wipe out what is left of the spirit and fellowship of the Middle Ages, which, as I endeavoured to show in the previous chapter, the Mile End College still retains.

IN the Stuart time then we find the centre of gravity of the Guild's government shifting to an important official class in close touch with the Crown; but they, too, are affected with the Guild spirit, and the government of the Trinity House at its headquarters is conducted in a very comfortable and cheery manner.

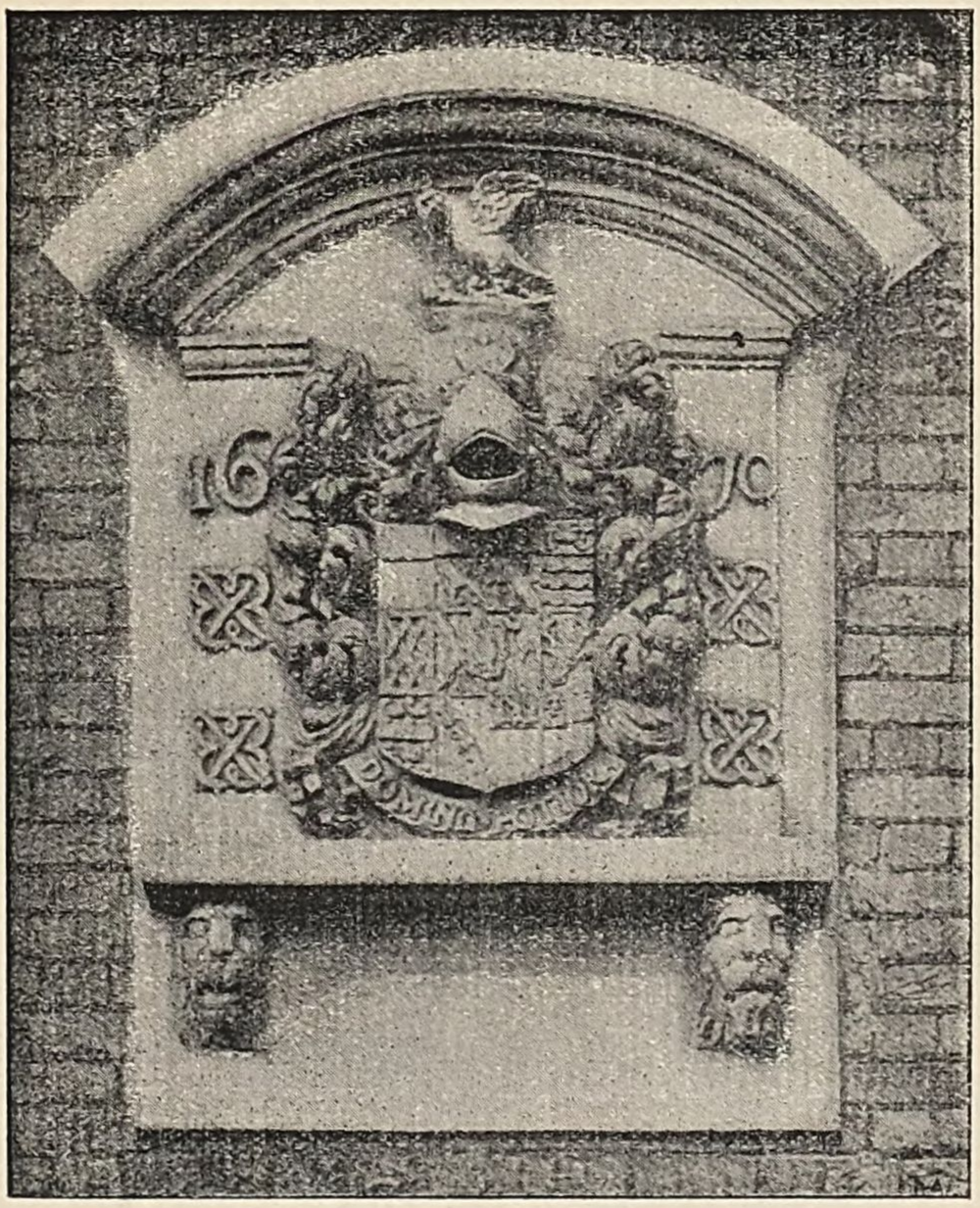
PEPYS' RECORD.

AS Evelyn recorded the dinners, so Pepys entered into the minutiæ of the luncheons. One almost gets the impression from reading his allusions to the Trinity House in the immortal Diary, that it is a place where eating is always going on. You merely drop in and, as a rule, you find the right thing; sometimes you are "cloyed with pasties," and sometimes "My Lady Batten," the wife of one of the Masters—and she is Pepys' *bête noire*—comes bothering at the Trinity House with her "crew of friends;" when the diarist records it very clearly and solemnly that he cannot abide her. But my Lady Batten's intrusions are merely a survival of the "brethren and sisteren" spirit of community. The point in short that is to be noted is that these post-prandial and social allusions only prove the distinctively mediæval character of the Guild's constitution. Institutions that dine never die.

STUART MEMORIALS.

HERE, then, we have a picture of what the Trinity Guild, or as it would now be more correct to call it, the Corporation of the Trinity House, was in the time of the later Stuarts, at the time, in fact, when the present buildings in Mile End were erected. Just as we see how the little Hospital preserves for us the traditions of the Maritime Guild of the middle ages—the King's Majesties Nay^ve^ Royall—so it preserves for us, in a still more living and concrete form, the record of the birth of the great British Navy, the beginnings of the Admiralty Board, and the groups of statesmen and sailors, to whom we owe the first large outlines of our national seamanship. The whole architectural design and treatment of the detail is calculated to impress this; the first thing that strikes the visitor is the little stone ships (pl. 4, p. 8) at the ends of the gables, then he looks in through the gates and sees the two rows of cabin-like houses, the flagstaff in the

garden and the statue of the sea captain in the centre; closer examination of the carved detail in the pediments will show him all the maritime forms and conceits of which it is composed, and if he finds his way into the Chapel he will note all the glass panes dedicated to the different Elder Brethren, their coats, canting heraldry and merchants' marks, and if then he passes into the inner court there is the statue of Capt. Maples for him in the full costume and stupendous periwig of the period of Samuel Pepys and John Evelyn.



THE ARMS OF SIR RICHARD BROWNE.

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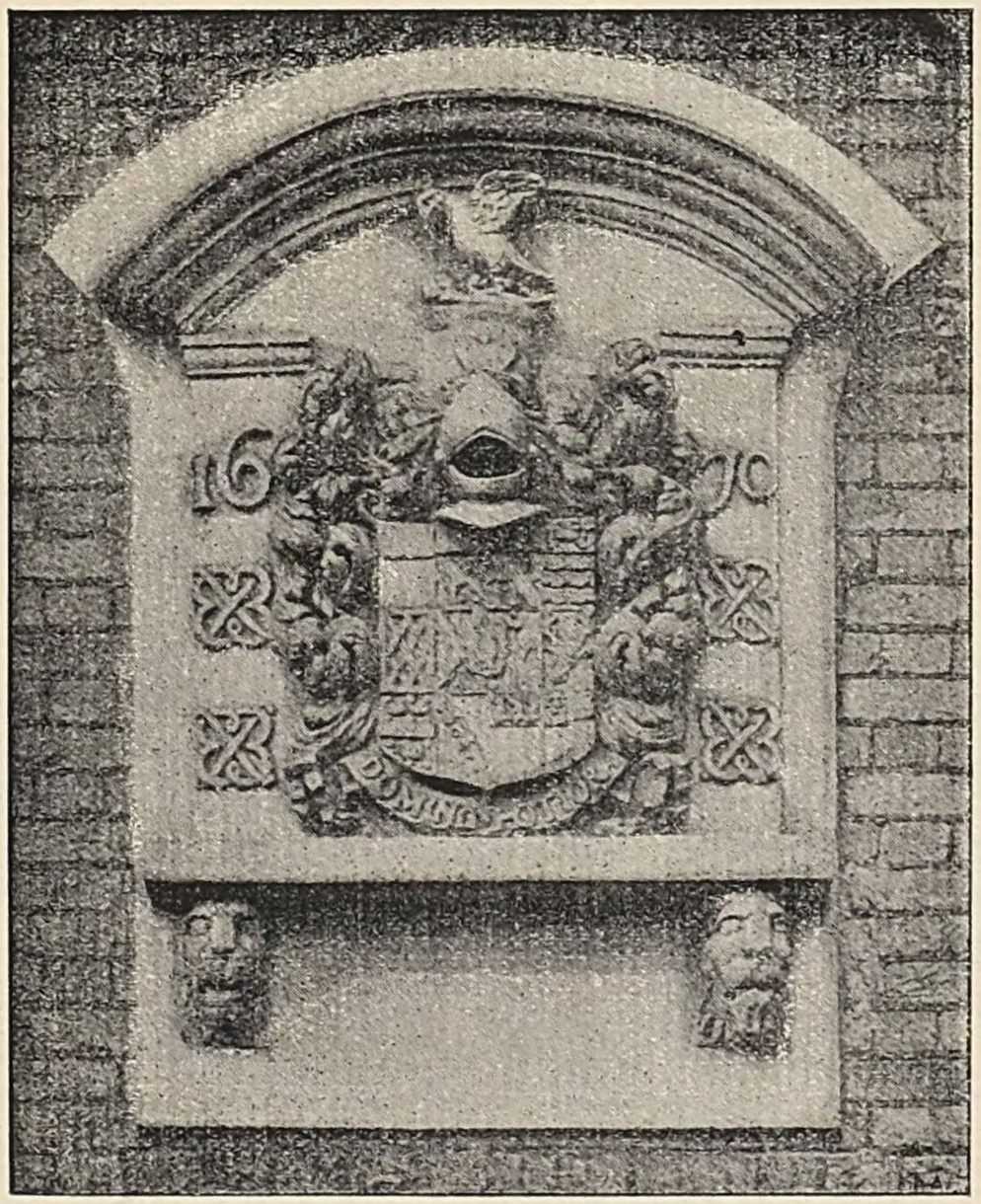


THE ARMS OF SIR RICHARD BROWNE.

CHAPTER IV. THE TRINITY COLLEGE AS IT IS.

I PASS now to a brief description of the existing buildings, and shall hope to still further show how they remain for us an object lesson in national history. There is a peculiar, and, in many cases, a personal interest in the variety of objects that at present form this little living museum on the Waste. For we have here the Wren work of the Hospital itself, the records of two later dates, the remains of the previous Deptford Hospital, the remains of the old Hall, the records from Sayes Court and the statues of two founders, besides other trophies. In short, associations with the names of Sir Christopher Wren, John Evelyn, Sir Richard Browne, Samuel Pepys, Captain Sandes, Captain Mudd, Captain Maples, with a number of earlier and later worthies of the Trinity House recorded in one way or another either in glass or inscription. Let me take the architecture first.

MR. BARRETT speaks rather as an antiquary than as an architect when he says that "the Trinity Almshouses at Mile End are, from an antiquarian point of view, of considerable interest, though architecturally they cannot boast of any remarkable beauty." Allowing for all possible latitude in matters of taste, the statement is an unfortunate one and conveys an opinion that is not held by any practical architect and certainly not by those eminent artists who recently gave their judgment as to the æsthetic importance of the building. It is to be hoped that the verdict of the historian may not have biassed the Corporation towards the destruction of their Ancient Trust.

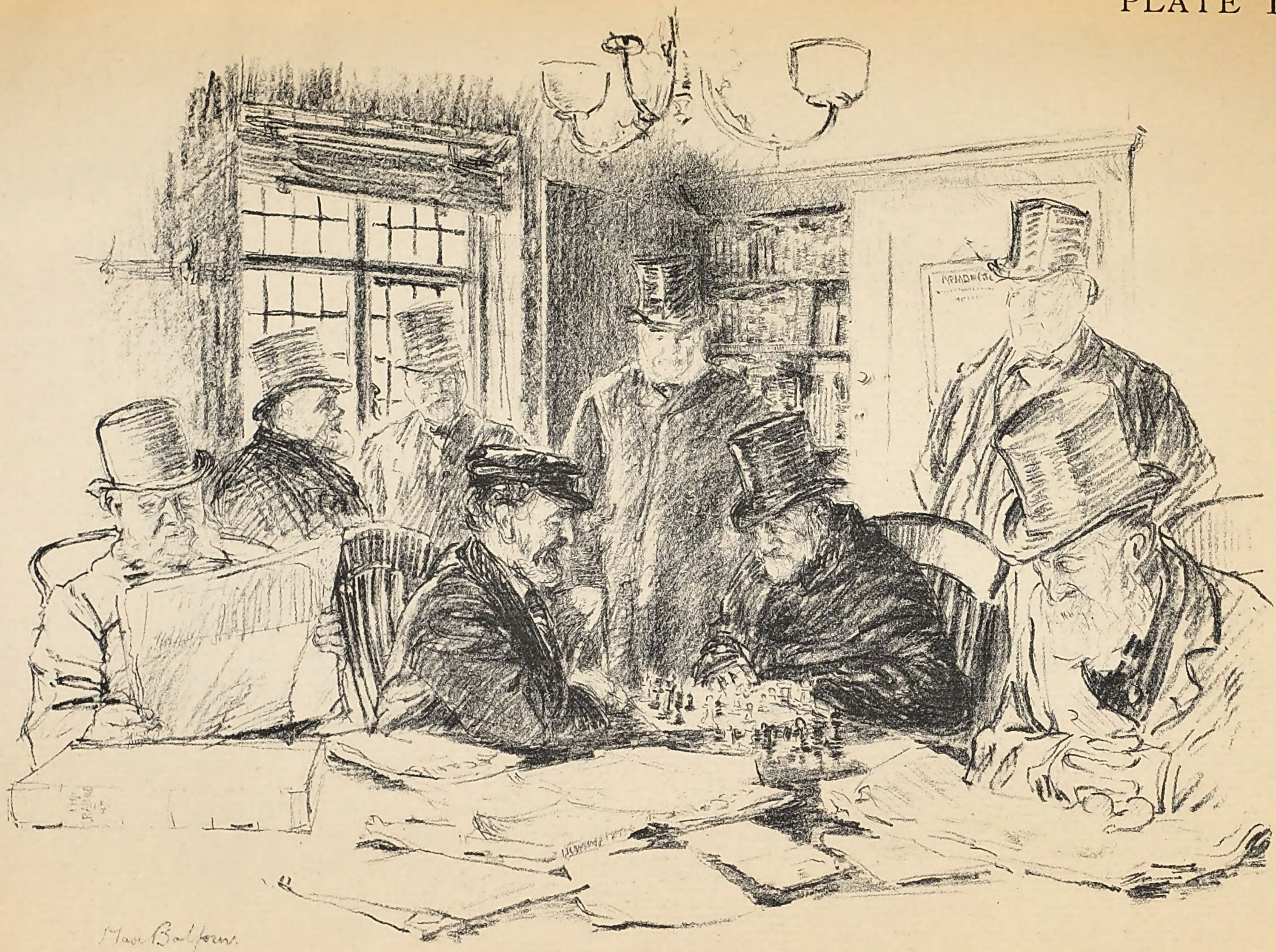
THE plan (pl. 1, p. 34) may be consulted for the disposition of the buildings. The whole plan is of a T shape, but of this only the stem of the T is of the 17th century or Wren period, the back court being structurally later. There is something singularly bold in the general arrangement of the earlier and older portion. Whether or not the exigencies of site demanded it, the plan is so conceived as to give the greatest amount of vista to the Chapel, the two wings of the buildings being thus set askew, while in order to obviate any sense of a want of symmetry intruding itself on the beholder from the south, the designer has screened off the Mile End front by a wall of singular grace and beauty. As Mr. Thackeray Turner pointed out in his evidence before the Charity Commissioners' enquiry, this wall could only have been the work of a great master.

ALTERATIONS.

WITH the exception of the two houses subsequently removed, but once standing east and west of the Chapel, before the second court was constructed at the back, the plan is the same as originally laid out, but a reference to Gribelin's print of the early 18th century* which should be compared with Mr. Garbutt's bird's-eye view (pl. 2, pp. 4, 5) of the grounds

GRIBELIN'S PRINT.

* This print may be seen in the Crace Collection, Print Room, British Museum, or in the Governor's Room in the Trinity Grounds.



Mac Balfour.

as they appear at the present day, will show certain dissimilarities between the 18th and 19th century drawings. Of these the most important is the existence of nineteen dormers in the roofs in Gribelin's print; the "Palisadoes" round the grass mentioned in R. Seymour's Chronicle of London are removed, as are also the two houses above referred to as adjoining the Chapel; the brickwork at the side of the steps is shown in the print as without cement, and the two little statues of youths holding nautical instruments and standing within the two niches towards Mile End Road are absent; there is also a very high vane.

AN early 18th century print, even of classic architecture, must, however, be taken with reservation; historical accuracy was not a quality that the engraver felt himself called upon to exercise. If the dormers looked nicer on paper, they were put in; and if the niches looked bare without statues, their insertion in the drawing could not but redound to the credit of the Brethren, so they were put in also. I have not been able to find any structural evidence of a previously gabled roof, and I am inclined to think that the roofs are as they were originally designed.

IT is possible that the Chapel may have been originally in brick in the same manner as the houses, but that, too, is doubtful. The floor level of the Chapel was lowered in recent years owing to an accident that happened to one of the old pensioners who it is stated fell down the steps on the ice. Though the steps remain, the actual entrance to the Chapel is now underneath them on the ground floor.

SECTION AND ROOMS.

THE section by Mr. E. Godman (Plate 6) which shows the Chapel, shows also the interior treatment of the rooms, which are painted throughout and look much like ships' cabins; for old folk, and especially old sea men, few methods could be better devised. The end house at the south-western side is given over to the Governor of the Hospital, and that on the south-eastern is occupied in part as a library. It is a cheerful little room within, well stocked with books and papers, and the old men sit here, with the quiet garden for a look out on the one hand, and with the great moving panorama of the Waste seen through the windows to the south. Preferably within sight of the Thames says one of the bequests for the founding and maintenance of the Trinity Almshouses, and when the buildings were originally erected, the masts and traffic of the river must have been easily seen across the fields of Stepney from this coign of vantage. Mr. M. Balfour's two drawings (pls. 11, 12, pp. 18, 28) give a very charming picture of what may be seen inside there any day by those anxious to have some illustration of what is meant by the collegiate life, and what it has been recently proposed to do away with.

THE LIBRARY.

THE ELEVATIONS

ARCHITECTURAL descriptions are unsatisfactory, and I cannot do better than refer to Mr. Allen's three sets of drawings in elevation (pls. 3, 4, 5, pp. 6, 8, 30) with the larger drawn detail for those to understand who can read in the language of the architect. The drawings, as they are presented, are just such as might have been prepared originally for the builders to work from. The elevation of the S.E. gable, however,

shows the windows of the library from the Mile End Waste, to the interior of which I just called attention.

THE GARDENS AND STATUES.

PASSING to the two little gardens within the enclosure, those precious open spaces of which we have so few left in East London, I would like particularly to call attention to the formal planning, the arrangement of the grass plats, the true naval flagstaff, and the position of the two statues. The statue to Capt. Sandes, or Sanders, as he appears in Pepys and Evelyn, stands in the front court (pl. 10, p. 20), that of Capt. Maples (pl. 9, p. 26) in the back, the inscriptions respectively record the reasons why. Æsthetically the two statues are of vital importance because of their costume.* In the day when everybody with the least pretension to "taste" insisted in masquerading, if immortalized by statuary, in the classic toga, as Roman consul or Attic orator, these two honest seamen had the common sense to see that their own clothes suited them best. Contemporary statues that are not in the pedantic costume of Greece or Rome, but in the periwig and tails of Mr. Vanslipperken, might be numbered on the fingers of one hand; in London, I believe, these two statues are unique. They are of interest, moreover, for the little biographical touches that they call forth. Both these old mariners were men of note as well as benefactors, and in a comprehensive history of British

CAPT. MAPLES.

seamanship would find an honourable place. Capt. Maples was one of the pioneers of English enterprise in India, in those early days just after Bombay had come to us by the dowry of Catherine of Braganza. He appears as Capt. Maples of Madrasspatam, and when his will was proved on August 28th, 1680, it was found he had been faithful to the old Trinity spirit of fellowship. There is a glimmer of romance and generosity about the record that he had left diamonds to the value of 1,500 pagodas to be sent over for the use of the Guild.

CAPT. SANDES.

CAPT. SANDES has an equally interesting record. Like most of the Trinity Brethren he was a staunch royalist, and he seemed to have been trusted with important letters by both the Duke of York (afterwards James II.) and the King. When poor Pepys was sent to the Tower in 1679, on a charge of popery, Capt. Sandes, with whom he was intimate, did him a good turn, and was committed with an open letter from the duke, at Brussels, to the King. We have the record of these various journeys of Capt. Sandes and his ship.† His principal work subsequently was that of naval organization, he appears with Pepys in the Guild's Charter of re-incorporation, and was associated with Evelyn and Sir Christopher Wren in 1695, in the Greenwich survey. It was the reversion of his estate in Lincolnshire, that went to the maintenance of the Mile End buildings.

A MUSEUM OF 17th CENTURY ART.

JUST as the Hospital is the historical record book of so many worthy and famous English citizens, so is it the repository of some of the most interesting specimens of 17th century art remaining in London; interesting, primarily because of their setting, but, in addition to the actual buildings

* See letter of Nauticus (page 27).

† Pepys' diary. Braybrook's edition, vol. iv.

·MAX·B·

and the statues, the specimens of stone carving, of lead work and of glass, have all of them a charm and an individuality of their own. Of the carved work I give illustration in pls. 3, 4, 6, pp. 6, 8, 14. The stone ships on the ends of the gables, and the arms of Sir Richard Browne have been already referred to; and the beautiful little mediæval coat of the Trinity House, which is observable in various parts of the building, is worth examination. So are the lead cisterns in between the houses, which are exceedingly good of their kind.

THE GLASS.

MR. BARRETT has made a special study of the glass, which represents a series of memorials to various Elder Brothers and Masters, but he hazards the rather rash conclusion that it ought to be removed from the chapel and carried off to the Trinity House on Tower Hill. Apart from the risk and impracticability of removing valuable glass, the obviously right thing to do with it is to leave it where it is. It is well placed, it is much more applicable with its little lattice panes to the 17th century character of the old College, than it could ever be to the rather frigid Adams' work of the great house on Tower Hill, and the records of these simple seamen of the 16th and 17th centuries, whom it commemorates, are more aptly preserved in the Mile End College than in the Trinity House itself. The former, as we have seen, preserves for us the true mediæval spirit of the old Guild, the latter rather suggests admirable organization and able officials, with an exalted board of royal and distinguished Elder Brethren who are too busy with the great things of the world to trouble themselves with the records and the intentions of the old mariners' Guild, or what becomes of them.

AS I have not thought it necessary to go over the same ground as Mr. Barrett, I have contented myself with making good the only defect in his admirable investigation of the glass in the Chapel, and have given a complete hand-coloured representation of the various lights in the two windows (pls. 7 & 8, pp. 22 & 24); from which the names and merchants' marks of the different Brethren may be more carefully studied.

TO those whom a slight description does not satisfy, I recommend a visit of inspection. With the few historical data which this monograph may supply, they will be able more fully to judge for themselves how far we are justified in calling the Trinity College in Mile End an object lesson in National History.

CHAPTER V. THE EVIDENCE OF SIR CHRISTOPHER WREN.

IT remains now to discuss the authorship of the buildings: in doing this, I shall confine my remarks only to the earlier portion of the work—that of 1695, and which is noted on the plan as the stem of the T.

INTERNAL EVIDENCE.

TO the architect, the first evidence must necessarily be internal, and the many features which the Trinity Hospital has in common with the other works of Wren, leave little doubt as to its authenticity. It is only necessary to compare it with the work at Greenwich and Chelsea, or with the designs of Pembroke or Emmanuel at Cambridge, to show this. The long low pediment, which is a characteristic in the side wings of the Chelsea Hospital, is developed as will be seen (pl. 3, p. 6) in the Mile End Hospital, the treatment of the quoins and the modillions is another marked feature that both buildings have in common, and the argument of suitability to purpose is one that counts for much when the work of Wren is in question. Just as in the Chelsea Hospital, and this is a point that Fergusson in his entirely unsatisfactory critique of this building misses sight of,* the whole design is instinct with the element of soldier life, barracks, drill and regularity, so in the Trinity Hospital the designer has understood that he is working for seamen, there is an air about it of cabins and bunks. Perhaps the most noteworthy Wren feature, however, is the treatment of the Chapel in its relation to the rest of the building. Reference to Mr. Pennell's drawing (*frontispiece*), or to the bird's-eye view (pl. 2, pp. 4, 5) and still more to Gribelin's print, will show the severe and simple handling of the central mass in its relation to the surrounding brickwork. Not only in the Chelsea Hospital, but also in the designs for Emmanuel College,† and in other Wren buildings do we find this feature, and it is very marked in the work at Mile End. There is, further, the evidence of the mouldings (pl. 5, p. 30), upon which Mr. Penrose laid stress, in his remarks before the Charity Commissioners' enquiry, though I am inclined to attach less weight to this, not only for reasons which will directly appear, but because it was customary at this period (1695), to leave such work, especially in London buildings, very much in the hands of the executant workmen, who, as we know in the case of the Strongs, acted a great deal on their own responsibility, receiving only general suggestions and the small scale drawings or sketches from the revising or superintending architect.

COL-LATERAL EVIDENCE.

PASSING from the internal evidence, there is much to establish the traditional assertion, that the work is by Wren,‡ and it is always fair to accept tradition where internally confirmed, unless definitely proven false. We know that he surveyed the Stepney Green estates, which bordered on the hospital grounds, for the Wentworth family. We have proofs of a

* History of Architecture.

† See Willis & Clark's History of Cambridge.

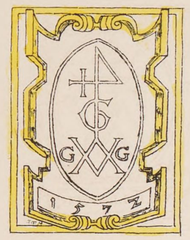
‡ Dictionary of Architecture, letter W, 1853–87, Fol. . The buildings are given under the list of his works

SOUTH-EAST WINDOW OF CHAPEL

· PLATE · 7 ·

No 11.

No. 12.



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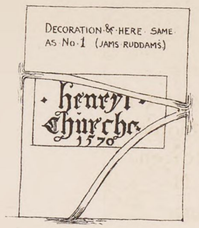

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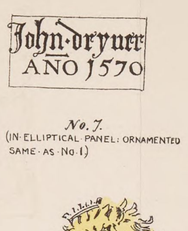
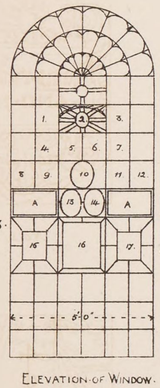


No. 7.
(IN ELLIPTICAL PANEL: ORNAMENTED SAME AS No. 1)

No. 15.

No. 5.

No. 1.



ELEVATION OF WINDOW.

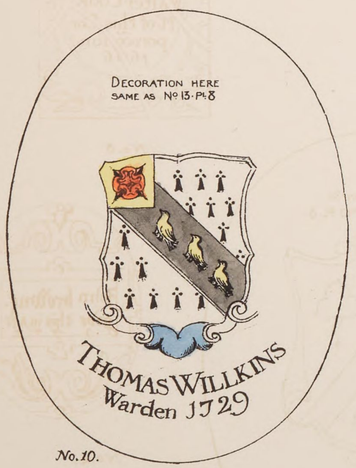
No. 13. CONTAINS ARMS &c OF JOHN HAZELWOOD: A REPLICA OF No. 10. PLATE 8.

At A.A. ARE INSCRIPTIONS RECORDING THE REMOVAL OF THE GLASS FROM THE TRINITY HALL AT DEPTFORD IN 1786 AND ITS BEING PLACED HERE IN 1793.

No. 16. CONTAINS A LIST OF THE ELDER BRETHREN OF TRINITY HOUSE.

No. 9.

No. 8.



No. 10.

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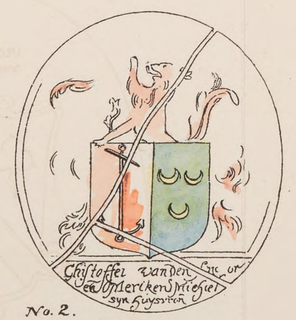
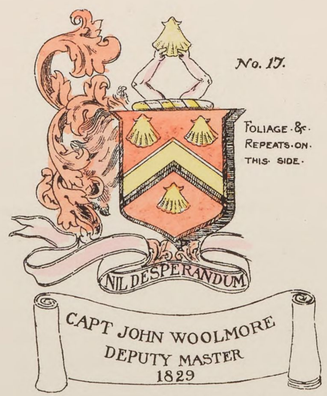


No. 2.

(THE ORNAMENT IN THIS PANEL IS GREATLY PERISHED)



No. 17.

FOLIAGE &c REPEATS ON THIS SIDE.

SCALES.

FOR ALL EXCEPT No. 15 · 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 INCHES.

FOR No. 15 · 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 INCHES.

Ernest Godman del.
June 1896

very close intimacy with Evelyn through the Royal Society, and, what is still more important, a direct communication between him and the Trinity House officials. "We went" writes Evelyn in his diary on May 21st, 1695, "to survey Greenwich, Sir Robert Clayton, Sir Christopher Wren, Mr. Travers (the King's surveyor), Capt. Sanders, and myself." This passage is most noteworthy, for it is of the year when the Hospital was built, and it brings the great architect in immediate conjunction with the two men who must inevitably have had the greatest voice in the planning and building of the new foundation. Capt. Mudd, of Ratcliff, had, as we have seen, left the money to build the Hospital, but Evelyn, by virtue of his authority in architectural matters, his position in the corporation, together with his father-in-law's previous benefaction;* and Capt. Sanders, whose munificence and later bequest completed and enriched the work, these two men must have seen it through. When we search into what other possible authors the building may have had, we find that there were two men who were engaged in surveying for Evelyn at Deptford, and therefore probably for the Trinity House at various times, Joel Gascoine and John Grove. Of the former there are some interesting plans in the British Musuem of the Deptford docks,† but it would appear that Gascoine died in 1692, and I find no evidence that Grove worked for Evelyn before 1700. Sir Christopher Wren, it is to be observed, had also been specially employed at an earlier date (1668), in the erection of the old Customs House, which was destroyed by fire in 1719, and with the building of which the Trinity Corporation was no doubt associated. We may also further put in evidence the close connection between the Wentworth Estates which Wren surveyed, and the Corporation, for as early as 1617, in a quarrel between Lord Wentworth and his copyhold tenants, the Corporation had been made joint Trustees with the Goldsmiths' Company, of a deed of settlement between him and them.‡

ON the other hand it may be urged that there is no documentary evidence to prove that Wren built the Hospital, that if he had done so we should have heard of it, and that there is no reference to it either in the Parentalia or in Elmes' life of Wren. To the first of these objections I do not attach much weight, for all the documents that might have proved it, one way or the other, were destroyed by fire subsequently; and for the other objection I think I am able to account.

THE HOSPITAL THE JOINT CREATION OF WREN AND EVELYN.

MY own view then is that the existing Hospital was designed probably by Evelyn himself, with the assistance, and under the immediate superintendence of Wren, that indeed it was their joint creation. All who have studied the conditions under which building operations were carried out in the later Stuart times, and the authority with regard to them which Wren as Surveyor General held, will know that in the first place, he was not in any way in the position of a modern architect towards a work, but acted as a sort of County Council and regulator of taste

* See above page 14.

† Map Room British Museum. See also an interesting set of dock plans of 1698.

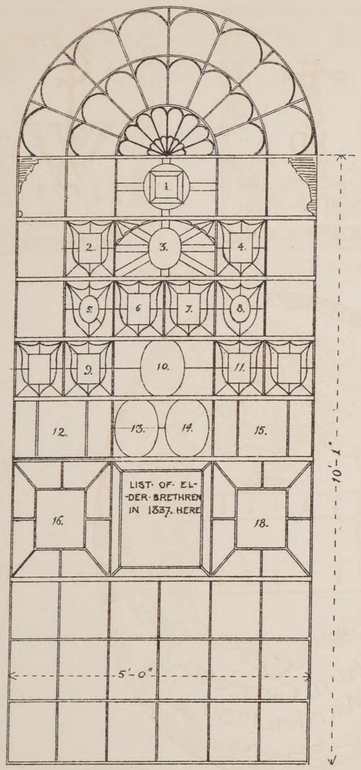
‡ Robinson's History of Hackney, edition 1842, page 372.

to all buildings, and that in the second, the workshop or body of masons or builders, who carried out work, were left much more autonomous, and free to exercise their own individuality in details. When we add to this the prominent part that the cultured amateur took in the inception of work; for architecture under Charles II., especially after the Fire, became the fashionable hobby, we know that it was quite possible for a fine building to be put up of which some man of taste was, to begin with, the designer. The omnipotent Surveyor General then set his imprimatur upon the work and made possible alterations and additions, and it was finally executed without what are nowadays called "Architects' Drawings" by a body of highly trained workmen, doubtless the London Masons' Company, of whom such men as the Strongs were members, and who wrought in a full understanding of their work and with still much of the mediæval tradition.

THERE is about the Trinity Hospital, a certain cultured amateurishness that gives it its peculiar charm, there is too that delight in garden architecture, which we know was Evelyn's particular hobby Both these points rather reveal the true authorship, and when we add to this the strong Wren characteristics which I dwelt upon at the beginning of this chapter, the close intimacy between Wren and Evelyn, the fact that they had worked together before in London building,* Evelyn's own position in the Trinity Corporation, and the absence of all other evidence to the contrary, the conclusion upon which I have ventured would not seem unfounded. Furthermore Evelyn worked not for himself, but as a member of the Trinity Corporation; he was also only an amateur architect, so he would neither lay claim to the authorship of the building himself, nor be claimed as the author by others; while Wren, who as Surveyor General, would in any case have had to pass the work, would, as it was only partly from his hand, not claim it either; this then accounts for it not being mentioned in the Parentalia or Elmes' life of Wren. It is a vulgar affectation now-a-days that unless a work of art can be labelled with a great name it does not pass muster, since vulgar people cannot appreciate it for its intrinsic beauty. I should be sorry to have laid myself open to the taunt of encouraging such vulgarity, but the historical importance that accrues to the Trinity Hospital as the joint creation of two such great Englishmen as Sir Christopher Wren and John Evelyn, justifies the risk.

* See Evelyn's letter to Sir Samuel Tuke (1666) on the coincidence of his and Wren's plans for London re-building. (Wheatley's "Evelyn").

SOUTH-WEST WINDOW OF CHAPEL.



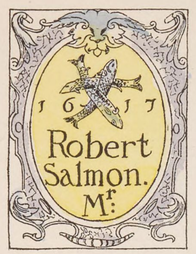
INSIDE ELEVATION OF WINDOW.

No. 8.

No. 5.

No 6. (PART OF EDMONDES' INSCRIPTION APPEARS TO HAVE PERISHED OR BEEN ERASED)

No 7.



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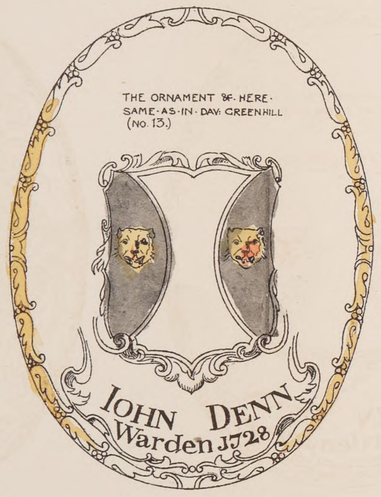

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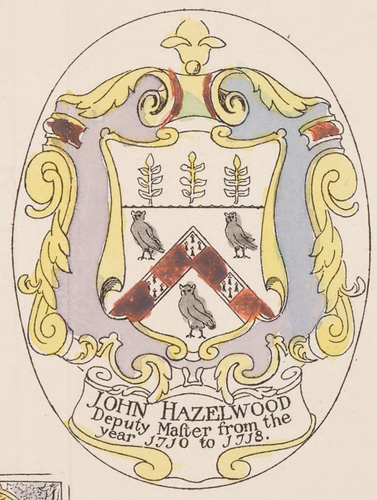

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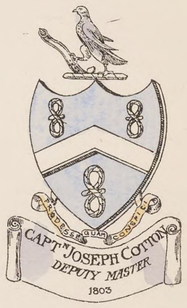

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No 12.

No. 3.

No. 2.

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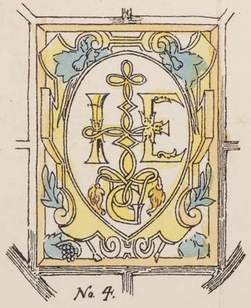

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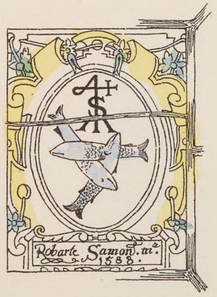

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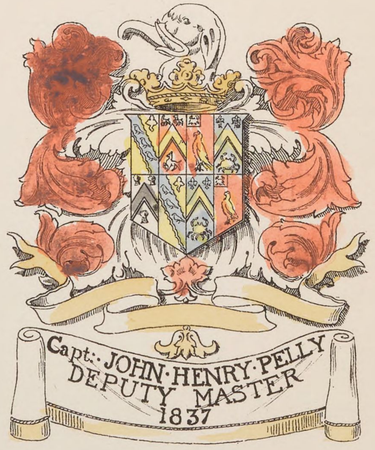

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Ernest Godman
1896.

CHAPTER VI. THE PROTEST AGAINST THE DESTRUCTION OF THE COLLEGE.

I HAVE now sought by description and illustration to explain what I mean by the object lesson in National History, and so bring my task up to the present day.

PROTESTS AGAINST THE DESTRUCTION.

IT is, perhaps, a bitter reflection on this object lesson, that a Corporation of such great memories as the Trinity Guild should have grown so callous and regardless of its past history and its moral responsibilities both towards pious founders and to the general public, as to propose such a scheme as was recently submitted to the Charity Commissioners. The manner in which it was received, and the voices of those who spoke in protest, in so far as they will also be regarded as having their share in this little episode in National History, justify, I hope, the insertion of the following letters. They are selected from among a great volume of correspondence that appeared in the public press, and, as will be seen, not with any bias, since they represent both sides. I am indebted also to the Editors of *The Times* and *The Daily Chronicle* for their kind permission to reprint some of them. When the Corporation shall have accomplished their desire of sweeping away the last vestige of the old mediæval *collegium*, and the sacred Stuart memories, and sold what can be sold towards swelling their list of out-pensions, these protests may remain on record. I give, at the close of the chapter, what is I think, a sufficiently complete reference to the various press notices, in them the full reports of the Charity Commissioners' Inquiry may be consulted.

THE following letters are only selections, but they are sufficient to show the storm of indignation that was aroused by the scheme for the destruction of the Hospital which was presented by the Trinity Corporation to the Charity Commissioners. The net reflection on the whole inquiry was that the Corporation had as little knowledge of what they were doing as the public had of what they were about to lose.

SIR WALTER BESANT TO "THE DAILY CHRONICLE."

SIR,—The thanks of all who respect things that are lovely, precious and of good repute, are due to the writer of the paper on the Trinity Almshouses in *The Daily Chronicle* of Saturday last. He has said exactly what ought to be said, and that with no uncertain note. It only remains to be seen whether he has spoken in time.

Meanwhile, it is well that your readers should know what else has been done. The committee of the Essex House Crafts Guild have drawn up a remonstrance, or memorandum, which has been signed by Mr. Ashbee, the president, and by the committee, and has been presented to the London County Council and to the Charity Commissioners. It is hoped that this document will receive attention.

Your writer spoke strongly on the cruelty of turning these old people into the street. He might have added that the original foundation of this house contemplated a college, or place of common residence, for the companionship and solace far more necessary in age than in youth. If, therefore, the present residents are separated and dispersed the act seems to become nothing short of a breach of trust.

But we are told that the drains are defective; that they have been condemned by the London County Council; that there are no funds to set them right; and that, in consequence, the place must be sold. This seems to make the destruction of the place a sad, but stern necessity. On further inquiry, however, it comes out that £5 for every house will cover all the repairs necessary—about £150 in all. This being the case, I venture to ask you, Sir, if you will receive subscriptions from your readers in order to

obtain this sum. If 3,000 will send 1s. each, if 1,000 will send 3s. each, the thing is done, and the Trinity House would no longer have any excuse for desiring to destroy what ought to be their most precious possession.

Your writer spoke also of the love with which the nation regards all sailors alike. It is a feeling which ought to be fostered and encouraged in every possible way. How better can it be encouraged than by the existence of this Haven of Rest in the very heart of an industrial population? But consider for what class of sailors the house is founded. There is not among all our people any class more respected than the officers of the Mercantile Marine. There is no man, anywhere, more loyal, more true to his trust, less self-seeking, more courageous than the British skipper. In every history of wreck we know what to expect—we read the thing without surprise—we accept it as a matter of fact, whether it be shipwreck by fire, or by tempest, or by rocks—the captain is always the last to leave the vessel; the captain goes down with the hands which have not been able to escape. This college, the only place of the kind, is the one standing testimony to the respect and the affection with which the nation regards this class. It is more—it recalls to one generation after another, the work done by the men who made the country in the years gone by; they were the merchant men who carried the flag to unknown shores and felt their way over seas of which there were then no charts. We cannot afford to forget the history of our merchant captains. In the inner court of the House may be seen the merchant captain as he walked the deck 200 years ago, as splendid in wig, ruffles, lace, and gold embroidery as a leaden effigy will allow. He was set up here at the beginning of our East India trade. For 200 years he has looked on while the captains have come and gone—the men who made the country rich—the men without whom the great Company of Merchant Adventurers would have been powerless. It is, indeed, a very sacred place. We cannot let it go.

Few, indeed, at the East-end, or anywhere else, are the monuments which appeal to any sentiment of patriotism or duty, or self sacrifice. Once there was a venerable and beautiful place called St. Katherine's-by-the-Tower—which was ruthlessly and needlessly destroyed—that place might have been made to become for East London what the Abbey church of St. Peter is for West London. Yet even its abolition was not so mischievous, so destructive, as would be that of these almshouses. The virtues which it recognises, the achievements which it rewards, the history which it commemorates, the gratitude which it illustrates, the love of adventure which sent these men to sea; these things do not grow on the kerb of the Whitechapel Road, nor are they cultivated in the streets which branch off to north and south. Take away the Trinity Almshouses and the memory of these things will perish. For the sake, then, of the young men who walk up and down that boulevard, as well as for the sake of the captains themselves, we must not let this college go.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

Saville Club, November 23. WALTER BESANT.

MR. WILLIAM MORRIS TO "THE DAILY CHRONICLE."

Sir,—Allow me to add my thanks also to you for your straightforward attack on the cant which assumes that a public body having the administration of charities has but one mandate, to wit, the increase of its money at the expense of every other consideration.

As to the Trinity Almshouses, looking at the beauty and charm of the buildings and their *immediate* surroundings, and the reproach they throw on us for the squalor of the outside world of East London; and looking also at the pleasure and decency of life which they confer on the present inmates, I can think of nothing which (*mutatis mutandis*) fits the case better than the lines of Omar Khayyàm:—

I often wonder what the vintners buy
One half so precious as the goods they sell.

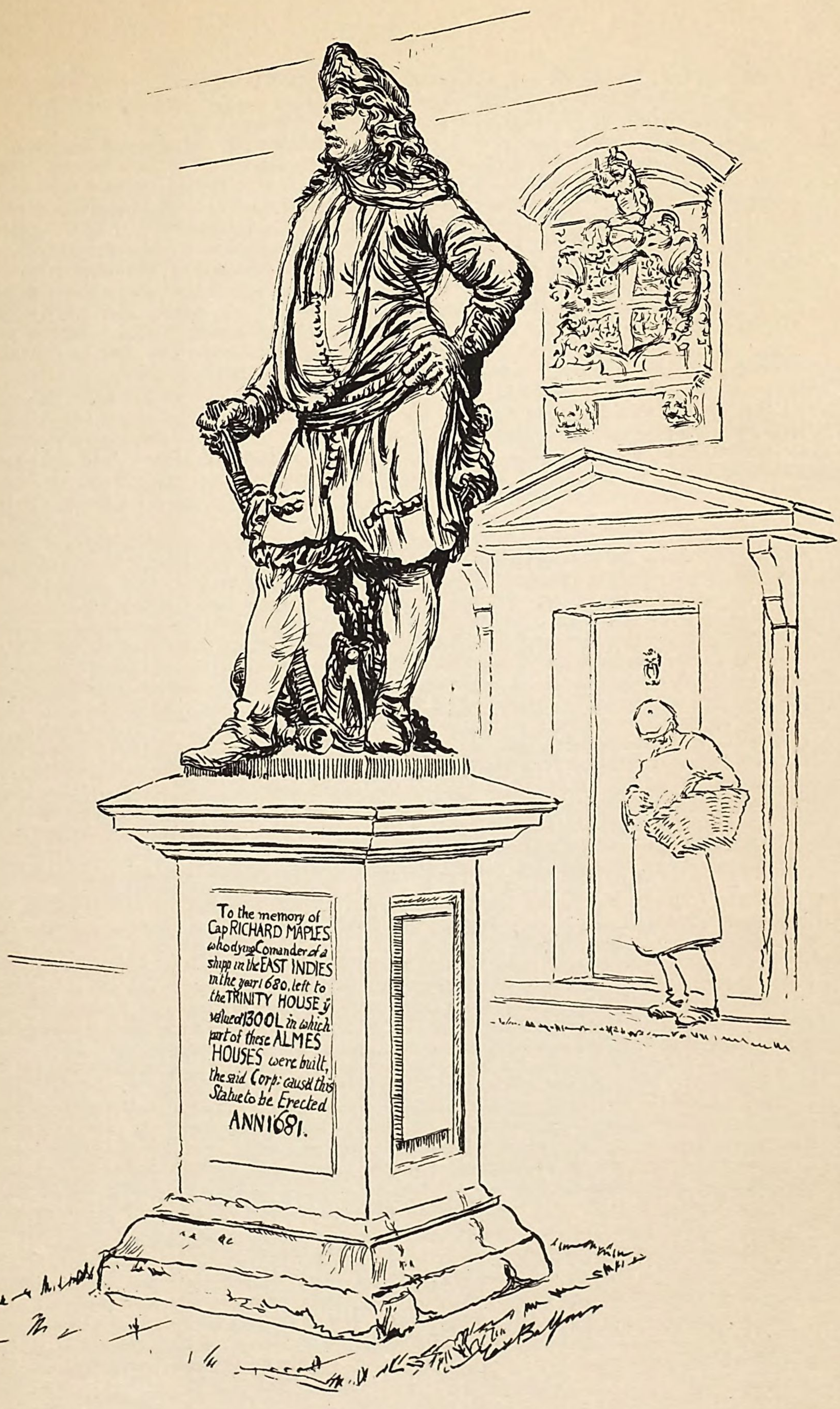
We must all recognise to the full my friend Mr. Ashbee's single-hearted and indefatigable efforts on behalf of the London citizens; and none, I am sure, are more anxious to do so than our Society for the Protection of Ancient Buildings; but lest anyone should think that we have been neglecting our duties, I may venture to tell you that we have been doing our best to help him.

I enclose my subscription toward the sum of £150, which, as it seems, the Trinity Brethren are too poor to find, and am, Sir, yours obediently,

Kelmscott House, Upper Mall, Hammersmith, Nov. 25. WILLIAM MORRIS.

CANON RAWNSLEY TO "THE TIMES."

Sir,—Unless strong remonstrance is made at the public meeting of inquiry which will be held at the Trinity House at 11 o'clock of next Wednesday, November 27, and unless good cause can be shown to the contrary, one of the most interesting and ancient of the English guilds, the guild of "the Mariners of England," will lose its habitation; one of the cleanest books of record of a useful charity for the past 400 years will be


To the memory of
Cap RICHARD MAPLES
who dying Comander of a
shipp in the EAST INDIES
in the year 1680, left to
the TRINITY HOUSE ÿ
valued 1300L in which
part of these ALMES
HOUSES were built,
the said Corp: caus'd this
Statue to be Erected
ANN 1681.

closed; and by the will of the Trinity House Corporation and the Charity Commissioners the fair haven of rest for ancient mariners in Mile End will be swept away.

There may, of course, be something to say for outdoor relief as opposed to indoor charity. Almshouses for old people may perhaps with profit be removed from London fogs to country air. Doubtless if, as we hear, a big brewer offers a big price for the site, the charity may be the gainer in £.s.d. The Skinners' Company would tell us so. But we can ill afford to part with the few picturesque associations with the past of our great seamanship at this time of day.

The merchants of London owe too much to the history of the flag which was taken from the Spaniards by Sir Francis Drake, which still hangs in the old hall of the Brethren—of which Sir Francis himself was one—to be able lightly to let its memory perish from their midst. "We are a nation yet," but we owe it largely to our strong sea-arm that it is so. And every year that adds to the prose of London life the poetry that remains to us is more dear.

H. D. RAWNSLEY, Hon. Sec. National Trust, 1, Great College Street, Westminster.

MR. F. C. PENROSE, P.R.I.B.A. AND MR. ALFRED WATERHOUSE, R.A. TO "THE TIMES."

Sir,—The Council of the Royal Institute of British Architects are desirous of drawing public attention to an inquiry which is to be held by the Charity Commissioners on Wednesday, the 27th inst., for the purpose of considering a scheme involving alterations in the method of dispensing certain charities connected with the hospital or college of the Trinity House Corporation in the Mile End Road. The council are advised that one of the results of the said scheme will be the demolition of the buildings in question.

We shall therefore be much obliged if you will allow us to point out that the buildings referred to are believed to have been designed by Sir Christopher Wren, and that they are among the most interesting examples of his work in London. They were erected in the year 1695, and are thus contemporary with St. Paul's Cathedral. Robert Seymour, in 1734, refers to them thus:—"This Trinity College or Hospital," he says, "is a handsome structure of Brick and Stone, near Mile End, north of the high Road, with a graceful entrance consisting of two Rows of building one storey high fronting each other, the length whereof on both sides is paved with freestone; in the middle a Grass Plot enclosed with Pallisadoes, and set with young Fir Trees, and at the further end, Northward, stands a very comely Chapel, with a Clock, ascending with divers steps." This is an interesting description, but Seymour might have added that the buildings are rich in stained glass, carving, wall panelling, and leadwork. It is indeed a monument of unique architectural interest; and when it is remembered that it stands on the borders of crowded Whitechapel and that its quadrangle forms a breathing space of great value to the district, we venture to express a hope that the Trinity House Corporation will exhibit sufficient public spirit to abandon any intention of demolishing the buildings, and that so interesting a relic of the past may be preserved by them in its entirety. We have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servants,

F. C. PENROSE, President, R.I.B.A.
A. WATERHOUSE, Chairman of the Art Standing Committee, R.I.B.A.

The Royal Institute of British Architects, 9, Conduit Street, London, W., Nov. 23.

LORD LEIGHTON, P.R.A. TO SIR HENRY LONGLEY.

Dear Sir Henry Longley,—Although the state of my health forbids my attending any public meeting, or taking part in any public discussion, I am extremely anxious that my absence from to-morrow's meeting should not be attributed to indifference on my part to the grave matter before it. I feel, on the contrary, the keenest anxiety in regard to it, and should deplore more deeply than I can say the destruction of the most delightful and characteristic group of buildings which is to-day menaced—a relic unique in its artistic character, and unlike many relics, still in the full efficiency of its usefulness. A relic, too, which surely the historic associations which are connected with it, should keep in the reverence of patriotic people. I should be grateful if you could make my feelings, for what they may be worth, known to your meeting.

Believe me, dear Sir Henry, sincerely yours, FREDERIC LEIGHTON.

2, Holland Park Road, Kensington, W., November 26.

NAUTICUS TO "THE DAILY CHRONICLE."

Sir,—In a lecture delivered last night by Mr. Seymour Lucas, A.R.A., he stated that when preparing for his picture "Peter the Great at Deptford," although he had been able to find in the Print Room of the British Museum prints depicting the costume of various classes in the reign of William III., he had been unable anywhere to get a representation of a naval officer of that period until he fortunately discovered one in a statue in the beautiful grounds of the Trinity Almshouses.—Yours, &c.,

Crouch End, November 27. NAUTICUS.

MISS OCTAVIA HILL TO "THE TIMES."

SIR,—I have watched with keen interest the course of the inquiry into the proposal to destroy Trinity Almshouses. It seems to me amazing that a building of such great architectural value, situated in a district where any beauty or space is blessing, possessing an historical interest calculated to call out national heroism and gratitude, should not be considered clearly worth the cost of drainage. I wonder what America or France would think of us. In the richest city in the world, possessed of a building reported to be the work of one of our greatest architects, a building which for 200 years has been associated with our national history, are we going to allow one generation to actually destroy the fabric for lack of money to drain it, and that when apparently there are funds left for its maintenance?

"Oh!" but the Trinity House appears to be answering, "it is not only that we grudge the cost of drains, but we could do much more with the proceeds of the sale of the ground. We have been for some time asking possible future beneficiaries whether they would like anything better than what was left for them."

Englishmen! here is a gift of a collegium founded to provide this sort of home, it is full, the residents implore not to be turned out, it is no case of an obsolete charity, and yet it is proposed to abolish it because certain people say that they would prefer that the money should be differently applied. Is this the principle on which our charities are to be administered? Is it faithful to the donor? Is it encouraging to donors in time to come? If a donor leaves money for a training school for teachers, are our future Charity Commissioners to ask if the teachers would prefer pensions? If some one leaves a piece of land for an open space, are future Commissioners, while people are still using and enjoying that open space, to say to them, "Would you prefer the money which would be realized by selling it?" Surely an almshouse built and founded in old days, and still used and cared for by the residents, has a claim to the ground on which it stands, and to money enough to redrain it, either from the funds left for its preservation, or from that which would be gladly contributed by a public who care for these small oases of beauty, for quiet, old-world life, and for air and light in an East End district inhabited by thousands, and with little left to cheer its monotony.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

190, Marylebone Road, N.W., November 29. OCTAVIA HILL.

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M.P. TO MR. ERNEST GODMAN.

DEAR SIR,—In answer to the letter of your Guild, and to the resolution which I have received from the Institute of Architects, I beg to say that I have for many years been only a nominal member of the Trinity House Board, and consequently feel myself disabled from any interposition. Nor do I know the merits of the case, which would depend upon particulars not now within my cognisance. But so far as my private sentiments go, I must say that I lament increasingly the barbarous work which has been so ruthlessly carried on in London, and the desecration, unless in cases of strict necessity, of many characteristic buildings and ancient local features.—I remain your very faithful.

W. E. GLADSTONE.

E. Godman, Esq. November 29, 1895.

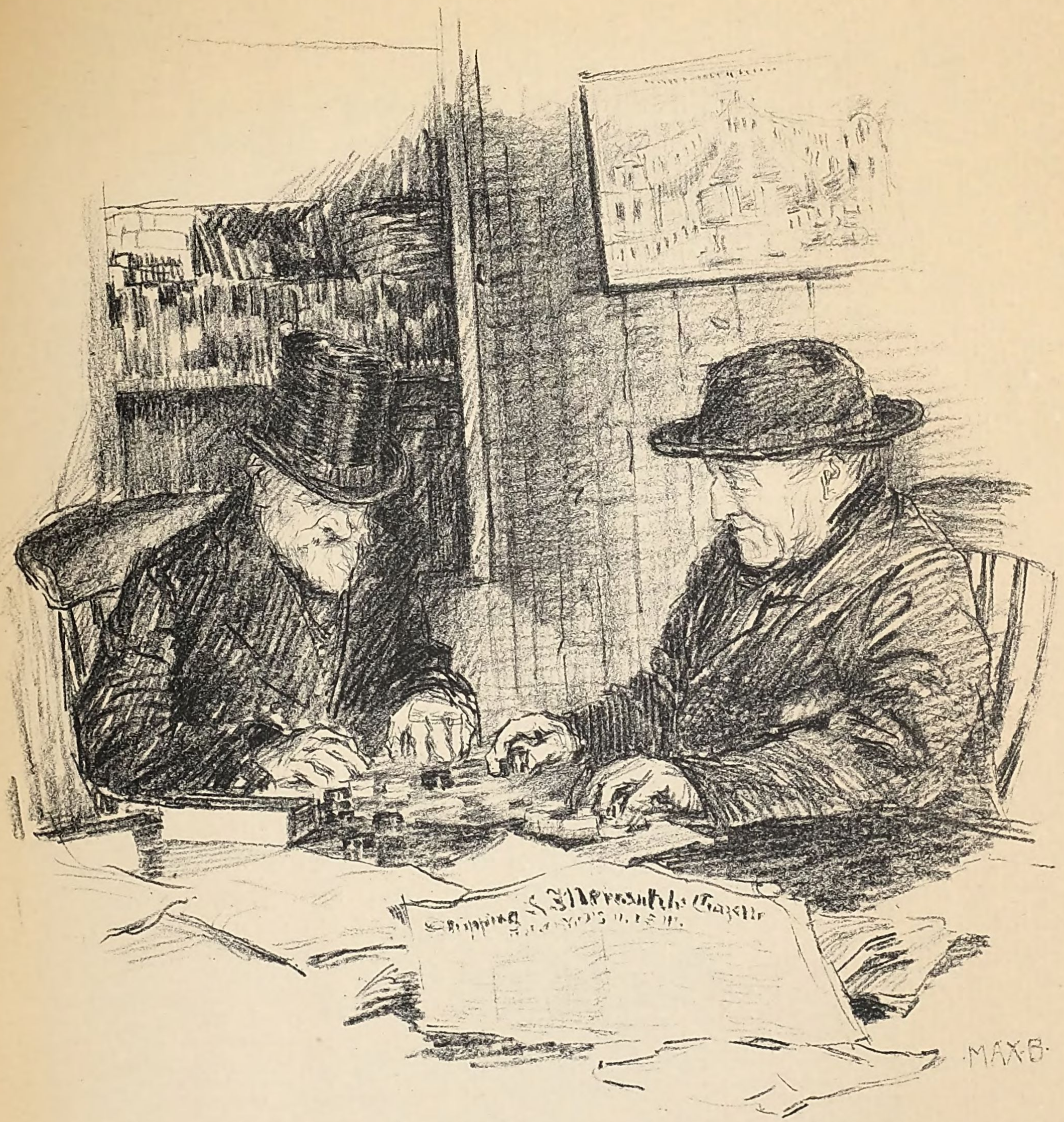
Secretary to the Committee for the Survey of the Old Memorials of Greater London, Essex House, Mile End Road, Bow, London, E.

THE DUKE OF ARGYLL TO THE EARL OF MEATH.

MY DEAR LORD MEATH,—Although as a mere matter of taste I sympathize with the desire to retain a building which relieves the hideous miles of brick in the east of London, I cannot without more detailed information on the facts take any part in the agitation against a scheme which the corporation has deliberately framed in the interests of those whom it represents.

Your letter does not satisfy me that the case has been considered from the point of view which must be that of the Elder Brethren. As one of the honorary members I have from time to time to dispose of one of the pensions to aged master mariners, and it has been my painful duty to select some one out of the numerous applications which come to us. The cases are often so piteous and so far more numerous than can be adequately dealt with that this duty of selection is a terrible revelation of sufferings in a most deserving class of men, which cannot be met out of the funds at our disposal. It the sale of a "home," however beautiful as a bit of architecture, would add materially to those funds I should feel it to be an absolute duty to support it. It would be an immense comfort to feel that a larger number of most afflicting cases could be met from year to year; and it is quite irrelevant to this consideration to argue that the home has revenue enough for its support. Out pensions are in numerous cases far more desirable than support in a home. Wives and daughters are thus enabled to live with poor and aged husbands and parents, and are relieved sometimes from exhausting and yet

PLATE 12.



unavailing toil. Considerations connected with open spaces naturally attract your attention who have taken such an honourable and benevolent part in securing these for the poor of London, but this is no reason for sacrificing any considerable revenue for the relief of those for whom the Trinity Corporation are bound to provide out of the property which belongs to them. Those who desire the ground for other purposes of the neigbourhood ought to try to enter the field as purchasers. It is hardly fair that men whose profession is one of continual danger and exposure, and who are often reduced to the greatest penury in old age and sickness, should be called upon to sacrifice for such purpose their interest in the only charity which was specially intended to help them in their extremity. I almost feel sure that if you had to look over the list of cases which come before us only too often you would feel, as I do, the absolute duty of making the very most of the inadequate funds at our disposal.—I am, my dear Lord Meath, Yours very truly,

ARGYLL.

Inverary, Argyllshire, December 3, 1895.

LORD BARNARD TO "THE TIMES."

Sir,—Miss Octavia Hill's letter on this subject published in your issue of yesterday, though based, I do not doubt, upon the most generous motives, is an attempt to influence the judgment of the public upon this question by what I cannot but consider as most misleading and unfair arguments.

I know nothing of the case of these almshouses beyond what I have read in your paper, but I do know a good deal of the Charity Commissioners and of the law which they administer. It is obvious that Miss Hill knows nothing of the latter, and I should infer from her letter that she knows nothing of the former.

If the object of this charitable trust is to maintain "building of great architectural value," or to provide the blessing of "beauty or space" in the district, or to "support an historical interest calculated to call out national heroism and gratitude," I have no doubt that the Charity Commissioners, like the other Englishmen to whom Miss Hill appeals, will do their duty and see that the rights of the public to these undoubted advantages are secured. But if, on the other hand, it should turn out that the object of the founders was to benefit "decayed mariners" or any similar class, I fail to see why all these other blessings should be provided at their expense, even if the law allowed it, which it does not.

Surely, Sir, the persons who are so anxious to secure these advantages for the nation or the district should undertake the responsibility of providing for them, and not attempt to shift them to the shoulders of the poor decayed mariners.

Funds subject to a trust for training teachers could under no circumstances, as the law now stands, be diverted to providing pensions for the same persons.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

BARNARD.

Raby Castle, Darlington, December 3.

MR. J. MACVICAR ANDERSON, F.R.I.B.A. TO "THE TIMES."

Sir,—In the excellent letter of Miss Octavia Hill, which appears in your paper of to-day, it seems to be implied that there is a lack of funds to carry out such work as may be found necessary in connexion with the sanitation of these buildings. It is well that it should be understood, once for all, that such is not the case.

In the inquiry held last week at the Trinity House by an Assistant Charity Commissioner the secretary to the Trinity Corporation stated that, "Apart from the funds which were dealt with by the Public Accounts Committee, by Parliament, or by the Charity Commissioners, the Trinity House had an income of something like £8,000 a year," and it was shown that of this less than one-half is required to supplement the special endowments by which the charity is maintained. It was further stated by the Assistant Commissioner that "it might be taken from the evidence given that there was ample money to keep up the almshouses."

This is conclusive. We have it on the best authority that there are ample funds applicable to the maintenance of the almshouses. It was further established at the inquiry that the buildings are in a sound and substantial structural condition, and only require some necessary sanitary improvements in order to bring them into conformity with the scientific requirements of the day.

In view of these facts, and seeing that a comparatively trifling saving would be effected were the scheme of the Trinity Corporation to be adopted, it is difficult to conceive on what reasonable grounds the Charity Commissioners could sanction a proposal which would involve the demolition of buildings which, from a practical point of view, admirably fulfil their purpose, and from an æsthetic point of view constitute, in the opinion of all who are capable of judging, a unique and beautiful example of late 17th century work.—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

6, Stratton Street, W., December 2. J. MACVICAR ANDERSON.

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6, Stratton Street, W., December 2. J. MACVICAR ANDERSON.

(FROM A CORRESPONDENT.)

THE CASE FROM THE TRINITY HOUSE POINT OF VIEW TO "THE TIMES."

THE Charity Commissioners inquiry recently held at the Trinity House had a much wider scope than the public seemed to realize. In effect, the inquiry extended over the administration of all the charitable trusts of the Trinity Corporation, and the almshouse question was dealt with incidentally in due course. Any one who sat through the prolonged inquiry and carefully followed the points raised by the Commissioner could not fail to have been impressed with the careful and conscientious manner in which the various trusts are administered. But, in addition to the searching investigation of the Charity Commissioners, the corporation has had to endure much criticism of its proposed scheme for abandoning the almshouses at Mile End with a view to the extension of the out-pension system. The silence of the Elder Brethren on this subject has been misunderstood, but the truth now appears to be that, their proposal having been formally submitted to the Charity Commissioners for adjudication, they felt it would be hardly right for them to appear in the public Press, arguing, defending, and passing judgment on the case which they had submitted for the Commissioners' consideration and judgment. Now that the inquiry is over and the heat of newspaper discussion is past, it may be well to look a little more carefully into the case presented by the Elder Brethren.

But, in the first place, it is necessary to clear away the effect of certain misstatements. It has been asserted that the income of the corporation is £300,000 a year, and on this statement many arguments have been founded and much literary indignation has been expended. The statement is quite untrue, for the corporate income is in reality only about £17,000 per annum. It must here be explained that the corporation exists in a dual capacity. It is the general lighthouse authority of England and Wales and collects light dues for keeping up the lighthouse system, but pays all the money so collected into the Mercantile Marine Fund, over which the Board of Trade has entire control. Not one penny of this income is applicable to the charitable purposes of the corporation; it is all spent on lighthouses and other maritime purposes, and the amount so collected averages about £400,000 a year. In its second capacity the corporation is an ancient guild or fraternity, possessing property of its own and charged with the administration of numerous specific charitable trusts, and for these and other purposes of the corporation the total income is, as I have said, about £17,000 per annum. From the evidence given before the Commissioner it appeared that between £8,000 and £9,000 of this income is appropriated to specific charities, and of the remaining moiety, known as the general funds of the corporation, an average of £4,000 per annum is devoted to the relief of decayed master mariners and their widows, the balance being appropriated to the general expenses of maintaining the corporation.

In the discussion in the newspapers a very strong point was made of the tempting offer said to have been put forward by a brewery company to purchase the land upon which the almshouses now stand. Holding the views they do on the subject, it is very probable that the Elder Brethren would have been glad to have received such an offer, but on inquiry at the Trinity House it is positively asserted that there is no truth at all in the statement. It is nothing but surmise on the part of those eager to find a telling argument against the project. No offer whatever has been made directly or indirectly, and the value of the site if realized has been only estimated according to the value of land in the neighbourhood.

One other misapprehension has gathered some strength. It was assumed that the defective drainage of the place was the chief factor in determining the Elder Brethren to enter upon their policy of disestablishment of the almshouses, and that £150 would cover the cost of repairs to the drains. As a matter of fact, the tentative demand of the Mile End Vestry was equal to an expenditure of £225, and this was to be followed by the demand of the Bethnal Green Vestry for about £370; then the surveyor of the corporation advised that the work could not stop there, but that all the old brick drains would have to be renewed, which would cost about £1,800, making a total of, say, £2,400, instead of the paltry £150 upon which so much stress has been laid.

The main reasons which have induced the Brethren of Trinity House to propose the change are that, being the custodians of this charity, for the benefit of decayed master mariners and their widows, they wished to extend the benefits as much as possible, having hundreds of applicants on their lists; that the almshouse system is costly and allows only a limited number to be benefited, and many of the eligible candidates decline to go to an almshouse, preferring to live by the sea at their own homes in preference to the breezy delights of the Mile End Road. Upon all this came the drainage projects, with their uncertain liability as regards expense, and then the Elder Brethren propounded their scheme. It is quite understood that the present inmates will not be allowed to

DETAILS·
OF·EAST·GABLE·

CORNICE·UNDER
SHIPS

WINDOW·SILL·

MAIN·CORNICE

(WOOD)

ARCHIVOLT·TO·NICHE

HEAD·OF·NICHE

DENTILS·6×4′ SPACES·BETWEEN 12′

CAPPING·TO·NICHE·PILASTER

CORNICE·TO·WALL·

WALL·FACE

GAUGED·BRICK·NICHE.

CORNICE·OF·
PEDIMENT·

WALL·FACE·

PILASTER·TO NICHE·

SILL·OF·NICHE·

PLINTH·

suffer. All the talk about turning them out into the streets is absurd and deceptive. Every consideration would be shown to the old people, some of whom it is known would be glad to receive an enhanced pension and go to live with their friends by the sea. Those who do not desire to leave the almshouses will in all probability be allowed to end their days there, for the Elder Brethren would never force them out. But as the almshouses became vacant they would not be refilled, and new out-pensioners would be chosen from the list. The effect of this change would in time be that the number of persons benefited would be increased by probably 15 or 20 per cent.

What does the merchant service say to this? This is a maritime charity, intended for ancient mariners all over the country; it is not specially a London institution, and the Corporation of Trinity House, in trying to make it more beneficial for the class for whom it is intended, have brought down upon themselves a storm of reproach. From whom? Not from master mariners and their widows, not from the shipping interests of the country, but from archæologists and antiquaries, who fear that the change will involve the demolition of some interesting old buildings. The obvious answer is, let the archæologists and antiquaries buy the houses and keep them up; the charity will then be benefited by the enhanced value obtained on account of the antiquarian interest of the houses, and all will be satisfied. Of the eligible applicants for the benefits of the charity, not 5 per cent. desire almshouses, and there are several hundreds of such applicants.

MISS OCTAVIA HILL TO "THE TIMES."

Sir,—In a letter which appeared in your columns yesterday it seems to be assumed that I made an attack on the Charity Commissioners. I am sorry that this should be so. My letter was not so meant; the Commissioners have not even pronounced on this scheme. My letter was intended to protest against the prevalent tendency to change the form of trusts too readily, with too exclusive a view to money value, and by reason of the votes of possible future beneficiaries. Westminster Abbey, or a park in a crowded neighbourhood, might on this principle be swept away because the land they occupy would realize a large price.

Nor certainly was I urging the preservation of works of architectural value and beauty and space for the benefit of others at the expense of beneficiaries. What I meant to plead for was the fulfilment of the trust. I gather that it does not enjoin the giving of charitable relief to the largest number of decayed mariners, but the provision for a certain number of them in these houses. Are we to assume that there was no idea in the mind of the founder beyond that of money grant to decayed mariners—that he cared nothing for the dignified and somewhat stately little home, for the nearness to the river where their old ships come and go, for the gathering together of men of one profession? If the old homes have become more dignified by age and historical association, if they are a blessing to the neighbourhood and the nation, that appears an added reason for preserving them; but it seems to me to be done by the simple fulfilment of the trust. I think trusts ought to be administered with perception of all these various values.

But the Duke of Argyll says there are numerous pitiful cases of decayed mariners amongst whom it is hard to choose. To me this seems a reason for our generation helping them in whatever way we consider best. Surely we are not so poverty-stricken that we need to pull down old buildings and sell land given freely to us in times past to provide for our poor. Why is all the cost of helping decayed mariners to be thrown on this trust at the expense of changing the form of bequest?—I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

OCTAVIA HILL.

190, Marylebone Road, N.W., December 7.

P.S.—I do not quite understand the last paragraph of Lord Barnard's letter. Surely we have in our own day seen the transfer of large funds from eleemosynary to educational purposes legally effected, and in such a way that the whole class of beneficiaries is also changed.

MR. C. R. ASHBEE TO "THE TIMES."

Sir,—The letters from the Duke of Argyll and Lord Barnard in your issue of December 6, following as they do upon the statement from the Trinity House point of view, cannot be allowed to pass unanswered, for all three waive the main question at issue. The point is not whether certain almshouses and whatever pertains to them shall be sold, and the charity thereby increased with a greater number of out-pensions, but whether a venerable body like the Trinity House is justified in the eyes of the public in turning its historic assets into cash for charity.

Nobody would deny for a moment that it would be unfair to burden a charity, and so indirectly the needy sea captains whom it is intended to benefit, with the maintenance of an historical memorial, unless by express wish of the founders; but surely it may

reasonably be expected that a wealthy corporation like the Trinity House should be mindful of its trusts as well as its charities, and not plead the latter as an excuse for shifting upon the public the responsibilities of the former.

A straightforward appeal on behalf of their old seamen's charity, with the Elder Brethren heading the list, would, I am convinced, meet with instant and warm response from all Englishmen, but the sale of an historic trust, to the great loss of the whole community, can only merit condemnation.—Yours obediently,

Essex House, Bow, E., December 7. C. R. ASHBEE.

MR. POYNTER, R.A. TO "THE TIMES."

Sir,—While the public mind is occupied with Sir Christopher Wren and the Trinity Almshouses, I shall be glad to be allowed to call attention in your columns to another work of this great architect which, if not in such imminent danger of destruction, is suffering much from neglect, and, as will be seen further on, from worse than mere neglect.

But first, with reference to the correspondence which has appeared on the subject of the almshouses, I should like to draw attention to a point which seems to have been missed by those who urge their removal, and this is, that the Brethren of the Trinity House, when they instituted the almshouses which are now proposed for demolition, thought it worth while to go to the greatest architect of the day for a building which should be worthy of the charity which they were endowing, and in doing so no doubt acted in the simple spirit which has inspired the founders of so many glorious and noble buildings in past ages, that they were working for the glory of God. I cannot help being reminded by the arguments brought forward by some of your correspondents of a certain box of ointment "which might have been sold for more than three hundred pence and given to the poor." And, moreover, once launched over this ground, where are we to stop? There is another building of the same architect covering a vast space of ground in the most valuable part of the City; extend the argument a little, and there is no reason why St. Paul's itself should not be pulled down and the money derived from the shops and warehouses erected in its place devoted to charities. Then, no doubt, should we see Lord Barnard's argument again produced—that it is for those who wish to save St. Paul's to subscribe their money and not to deprive the deserving poor. The principle is one to which any of our glorious monuments might be sacrificed, and will always appear reasonable to those who are not touched by works of beauty and imagination.

* * * * * *

Mr. Poynter then proceeds to discuss the neglected state of Sir Christopher Wren's banqueting house at Kensington Palace.

SIR ROBERT HUNTER TO "THE TIMES."

Sir,—There is a certain *naïveté* about the concluding paragraph of your correspondent "W.S.'s" letter in *The Times* of to-day. He attended the recent inquiry of the Charity Commissioners on the first day, and, having heard the case of the Trinity Brothers, he concluded that it is unanswerable, without taking the trouble to hear the other side! It is perhaps a pity that the question should be rediscussed in the Press, for both sides were fully heard by the Assistant Commissioner, and the Charity Commissioners have now all the materials in their hands upon which to come to a decision upon the application made to them. But, as the subject has been reopened, you will perhaps allow me to offer a few remarks.

In the first place, it must be borne in mind that it is the Trinity Brothers and their supporters who seek to disturb the present state of things. The almshouses are in existence and are in good repair; their inmates are singularly healthy, and devotedly attached to their quarters. If "W.S." had attended throughout the inquiry he would have found that the suggestion of any necessity for "an outlay of thousands" was absolutely baseless. The almshouses are at the present moment "cheerful and healthy homes." Further, there has never been the slightest difficulty in filling the cottages, and the Trinity House have ample funds to maintain them. The Trinity Brothers, who conducted their case with conspicuous fairness and moderation, substantially admitted all these facts, and ultimately based their application wholly on the ground that by selling the almshouses they could provide a greater number of pensions.

This brings me to the second consideration. Captain Henry Mudd, who founded the charity, did not leave money for pensions. He gave a piece of land for almshouses. The exact words of his will, which probably many of your correspondents have not seen, are as follows:—

"I give and bequeath unto the Master, Wardens, Brethren, and Assistants of the Corporation of Trinity House, of Deptford Strond, in the Coy. of Kent, all that my poore (piece) or parcell of land or ground with the appurtenances lying and being in Milend, in

the parish of Stepney *alias* Stebunheath aforesaid, near the Road there, for and during all my lease and term, to the end that the said corporation shall build almshouses thereon for the use and habitation of some of their poor."

Now it is a question whether the Charity Commissioners have power wholly to change the character of a charity of this kind, where there are means of maintaining it in accordance with the donor's wishes. But, assuming that they have, it is certainly a question whether they should exercise such a power when there are abundant reasons of public policy why they should not do so. Parliament is open to the Trustees of the charity, if the Commissioners decline to act; and Parliament seems to be the most fitting tribunal to effect a change of so radical a character. Parliament did not, however, think fit to sanction the demolition of the Charterhouse in order to establish pensions, although the arguments for a change were in that instance much stronger, as the Governors pleaded insufficiency of funds.

May it not be reasonably argued that questions of this sort should be treated either on narrow or on broad principles, and not upon some confused mixture of the two? If the original intention of the charity is to be maintained, the almshouses should not be touched. If, on the other hand, considerations of general expediency are to prevail, then it is difficult to see why the welfare of a whole neighbourhood, the interests of art, and the preservation of a visible and inspiring memorial of the kindness of a bygone day are not to be taken into account as well as the supposed interests of a particular class. Why should a charity be recast when it is doing good work, and when to recast it in the way proposed would inflict an irreparable injury upon the community at large?

One word as to the alleged preference for pensions. Too much importance should not be attached to a circular issued by the Governors of a charity in the midst of a controversy in which they are known to be deeply interested. The vote of those in the almshouses seems to possess a more real significance. Moreover, the Trinity Brothers have already numerous pensions to bestow, so that to a large extent a choice is already offered to applicants. And it should be borne in mind that there is no herding of men or women, as so many individuals, in these almshouses. Men are accompanied by their wives and daughters, and each little cottage is a home of family life.

Apologizing for the length to which this letter has run.—I am yours obediently,

Reform Club, December. 13. ROBERT HUNTER.

P.S.—There is another consideration which I have omitted to mention, but which I cannot help thinking should have weight. The Trinity Brothers would not dream of selling the almshouses, were it not that the site has greatly increased in value. This increase is due to the growth of Mile End and the East End of London generally. The additional value thus conferred upon the property of the charity by the existence of a dense population at the East End should not be turned to account to their detriment, through the agencies of public bodies, such as the Trinity House and the Charity Commissioners.

WITH these letters, and especially Sir Robert Hunter's, my Monograph on the Hospital may fitly close. The arguments for or against its destruction will probably weigh with each man according as he values a great national memorial; but a final reflection may be permitted.

IT is impossible to study the history of the Trinity Guild, without being impressed by the wise and loyal regard which the Brethren have had throughout English history for the wishes of the founders: it is impossible not to recognise their sense of charity and the admirable way in which the poorer Brethren have always been tended, and above all, the manner in which, up to now, they have maintained their position as Trustees of national greatness, and preserved the records of their own past history and humanity. It comes as a shock to our regard for so venerable and dignified a body as the Corporation, that they should permit a little group of officials, however well meaning, to propose a scheme for the destruction of so noble a monument of their old time charity and patriotism.

THE END.

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·PLATE·I·

THE 14 HOVSES FACING THE ALLEY ARE OCCVPIED BY THE GRIGGS ALMSWOMEN·

THE·TRINITY·GROVND·

MILE·END·LONDON·E·

SCALE·

0 5 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100 110 120 130 140 150 FEET.

CAMBRIDGE·ROAD·

SCHOOLROOM·

GATEWAY·

PAVED·WITH·COBBLES·

ALLEY.

ALLEY.

YARD.

PASSAGE (ARCHED OVER)

LEAD CISTERN DATE 1705

FLOWERS.

STONE·PAVING·

GRASS·LAWN·

STATVE·OF·CAPT·MAPLES·A·D·1681·

HOVSES·

FLOWERS.

GRAVEL.

PAVED.

PATH.

DRYING·GROVND·

VESTRY. WC. YARD.

ALTAR.

CHAPEL.

SHEDS

DVST·BIN.

PASSAGE·

STEPS·VP·TO ORIGINAL ENTRANCE.

69'·0"

179'·0"

CISTERN

LAMP·POST

STATVE·OF CAPT.SANDES

FLAG·STAFF.

PAVED.

THE SKINNERS' ALMSHOVSES STOOD HERE

COPPER

KITCHEN

LARDER

RECESS

COAL

CLARKES

CISTERN·

BASEMENT·PLAN·

BASEMENT·PLAN·

PARLOUR

OFFICE

MODERN·BAY

GOVERNORS HOUSE

RECESS·FOR BED.

A-A·STAIRS·DOWN·TO·KITCHEN·

LIBRARY

ENTRANCE·

ENTRANCE

PAVEMENT

·MILE·END·ROAD·

INDEX.

PAGE

Accounts Committee, Public 29
Adam's Work 21
Admiralty 7, 14, 15, 16
Allen, Sir Tho. 13
Allen, Mr. J. 6, 7, 8, 19, 30, 31, 34, 35
Almshouses at Deptford 14, 15
America 28
Anderson, Macvicar 29
Architects, Royal Institute of 27
Argyll, The Duke of 28, 31
Armada, Spanish 12
Ashbee, C. R. 25, 26, 32

Balfour, Max 18, 19, 20, 26, 28
Ballastage 14
Banqueting House at Kensington Palace 32
Barnard, Lord 29, 31
Barrett, Mr. 8, 18, 21
Batten, Lady 16
Besant, Sir Walter 11, 25, 26
Bethnal Green Vestry 30
Blake, Admiral 13
Blower, Thomas 10
Board of Trade 30
Bombay 20
Boston, The Trinity Guild of 9, 10
Braganza, Catherine of 20
Braybrook, Lord 20
British Museum 8*n*
,, ,, Map Room 23*n*
,, ,, Print Room 15*n*, 18*n*
Brown, Sir Richard 13, 14, 17, 18, 21
Brussels 20
Buoyage 14

Cambridge 22
Catherine of Braganza 20
Chapel of the Trinity Hospital 15, 17, 18, 19, 22, 27
Charity Commissioners 5, 11, 18, 22, 25, 27, 28, 29, 31, 33
Charles II. 13, 24
Charter of the Trinity House as exemplified at different times 12, 13, 15
Chelsea Hospital 22
Chess, Old Captains at 19
Chronicle, The Daily 6, 25, 26
Chronicles of London, Rob. Seymour 19
Church, Stepney 8
City Watch 12
Clayton, Sir Robert 23
Coat of Arms of Trinity House 21
Collegium 7, 28
Committee for the Survey of the Old Memorials of Greater London 3, 28
Committee for Public Accounts 29
Company, Goldsmiths' 23
,, Masons' 24
,, Skinners' 27
County Council, London 23, 25
Crace Collection in the British Museum 15
Craven, Earl of 13

Dartmouth, Lord 13
Deptford Hospital 11, 16

PAGE

Deptford, Almeshouses at 15
,, The Old Hall of the Trinity Guild 18
,, Docks 23
Dictionary of Architecture 22*n*
Disraeli, Isaac 14
Drainage of Trinity Hospital 25, 29, 30
Drake, Sir Francis 27

East India Trade 20, 26
,, End of London 26, 28, 30, 33
Effingham, Lord Howard of 12
Elder Brethren 21, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33
Elizabeth 12, 13
Elmes, Memoires of Wren 23, 24
Emmanuel College, Cambridge 22
Essex House 25, 28
Evelyn, John 11, 13, 14, 16, 17, 20, 23, 24

Fergusson (History of Architecture) 22
Flagstaff in the Trinity Hospital 16
France 28

Gable Ends of the Trinity Hospital 16, 19
Garbutt, Matt. 4, 5, 6, 18
Gascoine, Joel 23
Gladstone, W. E. 28
Glass, Stained 22, 23, 24, 25
Godman, Ernest 6, 14, 15, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 34, 35
Goldsmiths' Company 23
Governor's Room (view from) *Frontispiece*
Governor of Trinity Hospital 19
Grafton, Duke of 13
Grass Plot in Trinity Hospital 27
Green, Capt. William 15
Greenwich Hospital for Seamen 14, 22
,, Survey 20, 23
Gribelin Print of the Hospital 18, 19, 22
Grove, John 23
Guilds, Maritime 8, 9, 16
Guild, Mariners' 8, 12, 16, 26
,, Hull 9, 10, 11
,, Newcastle 9
,, Lynn 9
,, Wisbeach 10
,, Wyngale 10
,, and School of Handicraft 25, 28

Hackney, Robinson's History of 23*n*
Hall of the Trinity Guild at Deptford 18
Handicraft, Guild and School of 25, 28
Henry VIII. 7, 8, 9
Hill, Miss Octavia 11*n*, 28, 29, 31
Hospital of the Trinity Guild at Deptford 11, 18
Howard of Effingham, Lord 12
Hull, The Trinity Guild of 9, 10, 11
Hunter, Sir Robert 11*n*, 32, 33

India (East) Trade 26
Institute of British Architects 27

James II. 7, 13, 14, 15, 20
John 9

Katherine-by-the-Tower, Ch. of St. 26
Kayyàm, Omar 26

	PAGE
Kensington Palace, Banqueting Chamber	32
Kerrington, Capt. Nicholas	15
Leighton, Lord	27
London (R. Seymour's Chronicle of)	19
,, County Council	25
,, Greater	28
,, East End of	26, 28, 33
Longley, Sir Henry	27
Lucas, Mr. Seymour	28
Lynn, The Trinity Guild of	9
Madrasspatam (Capt. Maples of)	17, 20, 26
Map Room, British Museum	23*n*
Maples, Capt.	17, 20, 26
Marine, Mercantile	9, 26
Mariners of England	8, 12, 16, 26
Maritime Guilds	8, 12, 16
Martin, Saint	9
Masters of the Trinity Guild in early times	21
Masons' Company of London	24
Meath, The Earl of	28
Mercantile Marine	9, 26, 30
Merchant Adventurers	26
,, Service	31
Mile End	33
,, Waste	17
,, Vestry	30
,, Road	31
Modillions	22
Morris, William	26
Mouldings	7, 22, 30, 31
Mudd, Capt. Henry, of Ratcliff	15, 18, 23, 32
National Trust, The	27
"Nauticus"	20*n*, 27
Navy, Origins of the English	7, 9, 12, 16
Navy Office	14
Nelson	14
Newcastle, The Trinity Guild of	9, 10
Nichols, John Capt.	15
Omar Kayyàm	26
Ormond, Duke of	14
Ossorie, Lord	14
Palisadoes	19, 27
Parclos at Wisbeach	10
Parentalia	23, 24
Parliament	29, 33
Patrimony, The Right of	14
Paul's, Cathedral of St.	27, 32
Pembroke College, Cambridge	22
Pennell, Joseph	*Frontispiece*, 22
Penrose	22, 27
Pepys, Samuel	7, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 20*n*
Peter the Great	27
Pilotage	9, 14
Poynter, Mr.	32
Print Room, British Museum	18*n*
Protection of Ancient Buildings, Society for	26
Public Accounts' Committee	29
Quoins	22
Ratcliff, Capt. Mudd of	15, 23
Rawnsley, Canon	27
Reading Room at Trinity Hospital	19
Richard II.	10
Robinson (History of Hackney)	23*n*
Royal Charter of the Trinity House, as exemplified at different times	12, 13, 15
Royal Society	14, 23
,, Institute of British Architects	27
Sandes, Capt.	18, 20, 23
Sayes' Court	15, 18
Seymour Chronicle of London	19, 27
Skinners' Company	27
Skipper, The British	26
Sleaford, The Trinity Guild of	9
Society, Royal	14, 23
Society for the protection of Ancient Buildings	26
Spert, Sir Thomas	7, 8
St. Katherine's by the Tower	26
St. Peter's, Westminster	26, 31
St. Martin	9
St. Paul's Cathedral	27, 32
Stepney	33
,, Church	8
,, Fields	19
,, Green	22
Stone Ships at Gables	16, 21
Strongs, The	22, 24
Stuarts	13, 15, 16, 23
Survey of the Old Memorials of Greater London	3, 28
Surveyor-General	23, 24
Sylva	14
Taylor (the poet)	11
The Times	5, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33
Tower of London	20
,, Hill	21
Trade, Board of	30
Travers, Mr.	23
Trusts	5
Trust, The National	27
Tuke, Sir Samuel	24*n*
Turner, Mr. Thackeray	18
Vanslipperken, Mr.	20
Walford (Guilds)	9*n*
Watch of the City of London	12
Waterhouse, Alfred	27
Waste, Mile End	18, 19
Watson (History of Wisbeach)	10
Wentworth	22, 23
Westminster Abbey	26, 31
Wheatley (Edition of Evelyn)	11*n*, 24*n*
Whitechapel Road	26, 27
William III.	7, 27
Willis and Clark	22*n*
Wisbeach	9, 10
,, The Trinity Guild of	10
Wren, Sir Christopher	7, 18, 22, 23, 24, 27, 32
Wyngale, The Trinity Guild of	9, 10
York, The Duke of	See James II.

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